THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

PERSONAL NARRATIVES OF NATIONALISM IN TURKEY

Emel Uzun

PhD in Sociology

The University of Edinburgh

2015

Abstract

The Kurdish Question, which dates back to the Ottoman Era, has been a constituent element of narratives of Turkish nationalism for the past 30 years. The Kurdish Question stands as the most prominent "other" of Turkish nationalism. The members of two groups, Kurds and Turks, became highly politicised throughout 30 years of internal conflict and through their daily encounters, giving way to a constant redefinition of the understanding of nationalism and ethnicity. The encounters and experiences of these two groups have facilitated the development of various narrative forms of personal nationalism in daily life. Accordingly, the daily manifestations of the Kurdish Question and Turkish nationalism have grown as an object of academic interest. The question of how ordinary people produce – and are produced in – personal narratives of nationalism is a subject that still needs to be addressed, and this thesis aims to fill this gap by examining the notion of "personal narratives". Analysing nationalism through personal narratives enables us to see how hegemonic nationalist ideology is reproduced and practiced by individuals through various dynamics.

The thesis finds that the determining theme in the personal narratives of Turks and Kurds follows fundamentally the official ideology of the state about the Kurds, which is based principally on 'a strategy of denial'. The macro political transformations of the 2000s and the increased potential of encountering the "other" in daily life underline the challenging nature of this ideological strategy of denial. Herein, while the Turkish participants define themselves as the benevolent party in their nationalist narratives, they mark Kurdish people as terrorists, separatists and primitives. In contrast, the narratives of the Kurdish participants are characterised by the adoption of a "self-defence" strategy against the dominant negative perceptions of Turkish society about their culture: they assert that they are in fact not ignorant; not terrorists; not disloyal citizens, and so on. The narratives of the Turkish participants about the ethnic "other", the Kurds, generally follow a strategy of contempt and accusation; yet personal experiences give them the opportunity to politicise the problem on different grounds by empathising or humanising. On the Kurdish side, the subjects of the personal narratives are more often the state and the army than Turkish individuals, and again they construct a narrative that endeavours to reverse the dominant negative perceptions about Kurds. They attempt to negate the denial strategy through both collective and personal stories of the discrimination they have experienced over the years and generations. Vital questions such as through which mechanisms of resistance do ordinary people construct and practice their ethnic identities, again become visible through their personal narratives.

Declaration

In accordance with University regulations, I declare that I am the sole author of this thesis and the work contained herein is original and my own. I also confirm that this work or any part of it has not been submitted for any other degree or personal qualification.

Emel UZUN

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisors Dr. Michael Rossie and Dr. James Kennedy for the continuous support of my Ph.D study, for their patience, and motivation. Their guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis. I could not have imagined having better advisors for my Ph.D study.

Besides my advisors, I would like to thank the rest of my thesis committee: Dr. Jon Fox and Dr. Liliana Riga for their insightful comments and encouragement, but also for the hard questions which incented me to widen my research from various perspectives.

The following dissertation, while an individual work, benefited from the insights of several people. I would like to thank Feyza Bhatti, Asuman Özgür Keysan, who gave me helpful comments on various stages of my work or asked questions that made me think in new ways about my findings. Besides the technical support they gave, our company during the process became one of my most vlauable and enricher experience. Göze Orhon, Berfin Emre Çetin and Nagehan Tokdoğan Kartal were also the members of this small support group. Without their friendship this perriod would have been more frustrating and overwhelming pursuit. I am also thankful to Rebecca Rotter for proof reading my draft.

I am grateful to my family for their support. Without the help and love of my parents and my brother Maksut ve sister Sibel, completing the PhD would have been very difficult. In particular, I thank Murat Avci, whose presence and love was a source of strength for me.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

PDP	Peace and Democracy Party [Baris ve Demokrasi Partisi]
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress [Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti]
EU	European Union
GAP	The Project of South-Eastern Anatolia [Guneydogu Anadolu Projesi]
GBT	Criminal Record Check [Genel Bilgi Toplama]
JDP	Justice and Development Party [Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi]
KCU	Kurdistan Communities Union [Koma Civaken Kurdistan]
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party [Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan]
RPP	Republican People's Party
TRT	Turkish Radio and Television Association

Introduction

My Personal Story: First Encounters

My interest in researching nationalism in Turkey is derived mainly from my own personal experiences dating back to the 1990s, to my childhood, which was the time of my first encounter with the Kurds who have become the 'other' to Turkish nationalism. I grew up in a small coastal town in the Black Sea region, where my family farmed hazelnuts. During my childhood, as a member of an agrarian family, I spent most of my summer holidays working in these fields, and it was there that I first encountered Kurds, who came to our town as seasonal workers for the harvest in July and August. The first feeling that I recall about this encounter was one of annoyance at the inequality inspired by my parents between the Kurdish children workers and me. Due to my age, my memories are full of stories about the Kurdish child workers rather than the adults. As the child of the taskmaster, I was worked with the Kurdish labourers for twelve hours a day under the same conditions, although the attitudes of my grandparents and parents towards me and Kurdish children workers were completely different. While I was able to take a short break without permission, the Kurdish workers, both children and adults, had to ask for permission from my grandparents and parents even to go to the toilet. I remember the feeling of shame when I witnessed my father slapping a Kurdish child in the face. In other words, in my memory, I witnessed Kurds being discriminated against by my own family members, who were always so compassionate and caring towards their own children. Throughout my childhood I tried to understand my parents' behaviour towards the Kurds. I was always warned to avoid speaking with the Kurdish workers, and the attitude of my parents was not just based on dislike, but also on anger, fear and contempt. Though not as poor as the Kurds, my family was also a low-income family, so the problem was not based simply on class. The interaction between 'us' and the 'Kurds' was shaped by the legacies of nationalism. As a child on the side of this taskmaster-labourer interaction with the power, the disparity between me and the Kurdish children workers forced me to think about this visible inequality, that is a situation that was taken for granted. When the seasonal Kurdish workers left the

town at end of the harvest, you would hear dozens of stories about the Kurds. While some of these stories underlined the prejudices held against the Kurds, some of them were quite positive memories of the Kurdish labourers.

By this personal encounter that I lived with Kurds, I recognized the power of personal ideas and experiences that people formed through personal accounts in everyday life. As Mann and Fenton (2009: 531) argue, in order to understand the dynamics that determine the practice, framing, and narrating of ethnicity in everyday life, "it is necessary to attend to the nuanced social milieu within which different personal circumstances and social experiences intertwine". Besides the collective encounters that the members of these two ethnic groups face, personal encounters provide a crucial source of information for reflection and discussion about politics. I have observed people who are not interested in politics speaking about the issue of ethnicity when they have personal experiences with ethnic 'others'. Rather than employing a political language to describe such encounters, or conceptualizing their ideas and experiences using such political terms as 'nationalism' or 'discrimination', 'prejudice' they opt for another political language to account for their personal experiences with the 'other'. For them, some encounters, such those with a Kurdish/Turkish neighbour, or an annoying encounter with a Kurdish salesman in the bazaar, or the exclusionary attitudes of a friend in the workplace, or an emotional memory of a Kurdish labourer who worked for them in their hazelnut grove, cannot be regarded as political, but rather personal/anecdotal. That said I believe that these kinds of 'daily' encounters are indeed political, and through these simple daily encounters and the ways people narrate their ethnicity, they become political actors, either wittingly or unwittingly.

The data amassed during this research is not sourced exclusively from the personal experiences of the respondents, as relying on only one data source, such as personal experiences, discourse in the media or popular wisdom, would have a detrimental effect on the overall success of the study. An individual's account of ethnicity and nationalism in everyday life is based on several resources, which he or she draws upon to build a personal perspective. Gamson, in his book *Talking Politics*, suggests

that any political opinion cited by an ordinary person is based on three resources: media discourse, personal experience and popular wisdom, and by drawing upon these three resources within a conversation, the general frame of their account is constructed (Gamson, 1992: xi). Media discourse, popular wisdom and, most importantly, personal experience, all serve as sources of data for this research. Besides the concrete encounters with "others" in daily life, the accounts of the respondents document also the experiences of other people in their circles, as well as stories circulated in the public sphere and those constructed by the media. In this regard, the experiences of subjects themselves and of others, and the thoughts, ideas and feelings about ethnicity and the ethnic "other" emerged as distinct factors in the personal accounts of the respondents. As Ruane and Todd (2004: 225) argue, it is through a combination of collective and individual experiences that ethnic sentiments are created, although it should also be noted that "narratives of personal experience will be influenced by a socially embedded habitus of expectations, self-understandings and values which are themselves shaped by social milieu" (Mann and Fenton, 2009: 520).

Nationalism has always been a founder ideology, dating back to the pre-establishment period of the Turkish Republic. Though the ethnic 'others' of Turkish nationalism have varied in the ninety-one years of the history of the Republic of Turkey, Kurds have stood as the constant 'other' of the Turkish nation state. While the roots of the Kurdish Question date back to the late Ottoman period, it was the armed conflict between the *Kurdistan Workers' Party* [*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan - PKK]* and the Turkish army that forced the issue most prominently onto the agenda of the Turkish Republic after the 1980s. The official perspective that was developed and executed by the state was for years based on a strategy of denial, both of the Kurds as a distinct ethnic group and of the Kurdish Question. With the emergence of armed conflict between the PKK and Turkish State, the Question reached a tragic level which prevented the continued denial of the issue. Throughout the 1990s, villages inhabited by Kurds were burnt, more than 1 million Kurdish people were forced to migrate to urban areas, dozens of murders of Kurds remained unresolved and thousands of losses of life were suffered on both sides. According to a 1996

report by a Kurdish political party, 3 thousand villages were burned and 3 million Kurds made homeless, as well as almost 10 thousand 'mystery killings' by unknown perpetrators (Ergil, 2000: 128). Regardless, the strategy of denial of the existence of Kurds and the Kurdish Question remained in place in the official narrative of the State until the 2000s. It was in the 1990s that encounters between ordinary Kurds and Turks became more common due to voluntary and forced migration to western urban centres. These encounters occurred within the nationalist and suppressive atmosphere produced by the internal war. Through policies of the state and discriminative language produced and reproduced by the mainstream media, Turkish nationalism became taken for granted and an unquestioned component of the political language. Still, a continually ethnic conflict between ordinary Kurds and Turks living together in both the western and eastern part of the country does not exist. During the 2000s, sporadic attacks started to be made against Kurds living in western cities, which was the first sign of the antagonistic attitudes of the Kurds and Turks towards each other.

Nationalism is a meta-narrative with has a great impact on the practising ways of ethnic identities of individuals. However, meta-narratives hide the concrete experiences, perceptions and practices of individuals. In other words, regarding nationalism as a homogeneous entity that is evaluated only through such huge phenomena as modernisation, capitalism and industrialisation, makes invisible how ethnicity and the ideology of nationalism are practiced and produced in everyday life. So, personal narratives are employed in order to shed light on the personal reproduction of ways of nationalism and ethnic identities in this research. Thompson states that;

> *"… nationalism seems everywhere to be accompanied by happenings of great social and political magnitude in seeking to study it we tend to ask similarly big questions, and miss the many little sociological processes through which nations and national identities are more routinely sustained" (Thompson, 2001: 18)*

I believe that personal narratives produced by individuals within or against this meta-narrative function as reproductive tools of nationalism. Grand exclusive and inclusive definitions that are produced in the official narrative of nationalism are

regarded as meta-narratives in this research. However meta-narratives are composed of various sub and conflicting narratives that are produced by narrative strategies that refer to discursive actions. In order to develop narratives, various strategies are employed. The aim of this research is to make the main arguments of the narratives on nationalism produced in personal accounts. To do this, strategies that are employed to construct the narratives will be followed through the personal accounts.

The history of the Kurds, the Kurdish Question, the transformation of its demands and the rise of Turkish nationalism stand as areas of attractive academic interest for scholars, both in Turkey and in the international academic arena[1]. To date, the macro perspectives employed in these accounts have aimed to follow the roots of the Kurdish Question and to try to understand the Question by focusing on state policies. However, "there has been a little attempt to consider how national identification relates to experiences and events over the course of an individual's life" (Mann and Fenton, 2009: 518). Saracoglu underlined that within the period in which historical steps were taken by the government related to the cultural and political rights of Kurds, rising antagonist discourse towards Kurds is avoided by scholars. (2009: 641). This argument is admitted as a departure point for this research. The paradoxical situation related to the gap in the literature highlighted by Saracoglu can be read as a call for a perspective change for future researches into the Kurdish Question and Turkish nationalism. While Saracoglu points out the rise in negative perceptions towards Kurds, I feel it necessary to add the other side, the Kurds, to the discussion. This discriminative and antagonistic language developed by Turks, Lazs, Cerkezh, Arabs etc. towards Kurds determined the reactions that Kurds gave. In other words, everyday life is a venue for personal encounters that can only be understood by following the interactions and the forms of encounters. Avoiding one side of the encounter reduces the clarity of the arguments that are developed in an academic research that focuses on the ordinary and personal appearances of nationalism. As Saracoglu states, despite the positive political steps taken by the

[1] See Yeğen (1999), (2006), (2011); Barkey and Fuller (1997), (1998); Kurban and Yolacan (2008); Ergil (2000) (2009); Vali (1998), (2013); Kirisci, K. and Winrow G. (1997).

government, the antagonist language produced and reproduced by ordinary Turks and Kurds towards each other still stands as an incomprehensible part of the issue. In order to shed light on this unknown side of the Question, some research is conducted, focusing on the personal, ordinary formations of the notions of ethnicity and nationalism in everyday life. In addition to Saracoglu's (2009), (2001) studies, Senturk's (2012), Caglayan's (2007), (2013) studies are the examples that can be given for the research that focus on the gender perspective and the losses of the families of the Kurds. While Mater's (1999), Aktan's (2012), and Alatas's (2013), Matur (2011), Akin and Danisman's (2011) studies are not academic texts, they are quite successful to give an insight into personal experiences of mostly Kurds and partially Turks living together in Turkey.

This thesis suggests that ordinary people are involved practically in producing and reproducing ethnic identities, both in the course of their actions and in their personal accounts. The existence of an ethnic discord between Kurds and Turks in Turkey triggered the rise of notions of "ethnicity" and "nation" in both the political and social spheres of everyday life. Within such a politically and culturally polarised atmosphere, nationalism became a meta-narrative with the power to mediate all social concepts that exist within it. All concepts of ethnicity, nation and citizen are discussed, defined, written about and thought of through the frame of nationalism. The omnipresent nature and power of Turkish nationalism in both political and social life makes daily discussions between ordinary people about the ethnic other a nationalist narrative. This preference is in fact derived from the field experience.

At the very outset of the interview, when I would introduce the research, the respondents would focus upon the term "nationalism", singling it out from the many concepts to which I referred, such as "ethnic identity", "the Kurdish Question", "Kurdishness/Turkishness" and "story", thus placing nationalism at the centre of their accounts. The respondents tended to state their ideas, feelings, thoughts and experience with the ethnic other in their daily lives, but basically, they were talking about nationalism. For the Turkish respondents, the notion of nationalism automatically leads to the opposing concept, the Kurdish Question. The Kurdish

respondents also singled out the term “nationalism” from my sentences in order to frame their accounts, but mostly used it to highlight the negative consequences of the ideology of Turkish nationalism for their daily lives through personal stories.

In this regard, all personal ideas, feelings and experiences were framed and narrated with reference to two topics: Turkish nationalism and the Kurdish Question. It should be noted that this thesis is not devoted specifically to either issue, as the intention is rather to understand how ordinary people see this ethnic conflict between the Kurds and Turks, how they define the “self” and the “other” in this encounter, and how they define their relationship with the ethnic other within this excessively nationalist-driven political atmosphere.

This thesis therefore aims to make an original contribution to knowledge by examining the ways of narrating about the conflict between Kurds and Turks in everyday life. The personal narratives of nationalism will be underlined by;

- Employing a bottom-up approach that makes possible to see the personal and ordinary forms of ethnicity practices of Kurdish and Turkish individuals, making visible the ways they employ the ideology of nationalism through their narratives.

- Centring the personal narratives that shed light on the thoughts and experiences with the ethnic ‘other’ in the flow of everyday life.

Research Aims and Questions

The main objective of this research is to make sense of the personal stories of both Kurdish and Turkish individuals, collected through semi-structured interviews, in order to understand how relationships develop in everyday life among ordinary Kurds and Turks, and what kind of stories they tell about each other. The following research questions are addressed that in nationalist-driven social area;

1. How do the Turkish and Kurdish respondents perceive and define this ethnic conflict?
2. How do the respondents construct personal accounts? What kind of themes and topics appear as common points in these accounts?

3. How do they perceive and define the "self" and the "other" within their personal accounts?
4. Do they have any experience of concrete encounters with the "other"? Which types of narratives are developed in order to articulate their personal experiences with the "other"?

Narrative inquiry is employed in both the methodology of the data collection and in the analysis of the data collected in Ankara between March and November 2011, involving 20 male and 20 female Kurdish and Turkish participants. As befits a narrative inquiry perspective, giving voice to the silent masses of the society is the aim. Furthermore, it was ordinary Kurds and Turks with political affiliations to no political party or organisation that were preferred as participants in this research.

Outline of the Thesis

The first chapter presents an overview of the context of the Kurdish Question and Turkish nationalism, which facilitates an understanding of the present political situation in Turkey. By visiting the most prominent time periods in the emergence of the notion of nationalism in Turkey, the position of the Kurdish Question is clearly defined within Turkey's narrative of nationalism. The reasons behind the discomfort of the Kurds, the development of the Kurdish movement and the transformation of Turkish nationalism within the 90-year history of the Republic of Turkey are discussed.

Chapter 2 presents the approaches to nationalism employed throughout this research. In order to develop a discussion of nationalism from a bottom-up perspective, initially, macro theories of nationalism are visited. By the critiques targeting the macro theories of nationalism in terms of its blindness on the personal and daily appearances of nationalism, the necessity of the bottom up perspective is discussed. Through a literature review of some seminal works and descriptions of such concepts as "ethnicity in everyday life" and "everyday nationhood", the theoretical perspective of this research is formed.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodological approach. The tradition of "narrative inquiry", employed as the data collection and analysis approach in this research, is explained. The importance of personal narratives in understanding as nationalism developed at length. To conceptualise personal narratives politically, a discussion is made of the political narratives and stories, as well as the related concepts of experience and encounter. This approach gives voice to the silent actors of society, bringing to light the different layers within the accounts of ordinary people. These are discussed under the key themes of talking politics, resistance and counter narratives.

In Chapter 4, details of the qualitative study are presented, explaining how the research area was selected, how participants were recruited, and providing details about the interviews. As befits a narrative inquiry, the position of the researcher is of great importance and my personal encounters are discussed, addressing the issue of self-reflexivity. In addition to these discussions, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study and data are discussed.

The next four chapters set out the findings of the research. Chapter 5 discusses the main narratives and narrative strategy, being the narrative of denial prevalent in the accounts of the participants. In accordance with the official discourse of the State and mass media over the last 30 years, the denial of both Kurdishness as an ethnic identity and the Kurdish Question is addressed by both Kurdish and Turkish participants in different forms and with different motives. The chapter sets out the main arguments employed to justify the denial of the Kurdish Question, while the main forms of denial employed by both Kurdish and Turkish participants, such as threats and counter narratives, present different angles seen in the narrative strategies.

Chapter 6 focuses on definitions of self and ethnic other which are employed. The ways of defining the self are discussed. While "being a nationalist" appears as the main means of self-definition among Turkish participants, among Kurdish

participants the prevalent means of self-definition was "we are discriminated against", a narrative strategy of self-defence. Further, the chapter discusses the means of defining the ethnic "other". For Turkish participants, the tendency was to speak about ambiguous bad and good Kurdish typologies based mainly on the arguments used in official State discourse. On the other hand, the accounts of Kurdish participants were formed within the narrative strategy of self-defence, with efforts made to explain why they seem different because of their cultural differences and efforts to prove their good intentions towards Turks through personal stories.

Chapter 7 focuses on the personal stories of Turkish participants regarding encounters with Kurds in their daily lives. From these it is possible to see how narrative strategies of contempt and accusation are employed within the personal accounts. The dehumanisation of the Kurds in the accounts of Turkish participants is a common strategy and linked to descriptions of cultural differences described in a contemptuous tone. Besides the narrative strategies that locate Kurds in a passive subject position as structurally backward, different and primitive, there is a further narrative strategy of accusation employed by Turkish respondents that depicts Kurds as backward, uneducated and disloyal. The dilemma between these two narrative strategies in terms of subject positions emerged as a point of conflict that the participants had to overcome in the course of the interviews.

Chapter 8 presents the personal stories of Kurdish participants based on their personal encounters with Turks. While Turkish respondents related dozens of stories about Kurds based on their personal encounters, the accounts of the Kurdish respondents were not related to ordinary Turks. It became apparent that the "other" for the Kurds was, rather, the Turkish State. The primary and most tragic encounter between Turks and Kurds was the presence of the military in the eastern part of Turkey throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The severity of this encounter and the collective and personal experiences within the Kurdish territory rendered the daily encounters with ordinary Turks unworthy of narration. The more tragic the tale, the more worthy of telling, according to the Kurdish participants. In this regard, their personal stories about the Turks were based mostly on experiences with soldiers and

police. In this regard, the discrimination they experienced by the state and in different aspects of their daily lives not only appeared as a theme, but also as a narrative strategy. In this regard, personal stories revolved around schools, workplaces, universities and neighbourhoods. Following these stories of discrimination, strategies of resistance are discussed. From these stories of resistance it becomes possible to see how accounts are developed through the narrative strategy of “self-defence”; also, a “sense of being discriminated against” goes together with the counter narratives and narrative strategies of resistance.

1. The Kurdish Question: A Long History of Denial

While the roots of the Kurdish-Turkish conflict date back to the late Ottoman era, the issue has stood as an unresolved problem throughout the history of the Turkish Republic. The founding ideology of the Turkish Republic was based on the notion of a 'single nation', 'single language' and a centralised 'Turkish' nation, which brought about a 'strategic denial' of the Kurdish ethnic minority group and the Kurdish Question. As a result, the Kurdish Question has become the most striking problem in Turkey over the past three decades. This tragic story features the loss of thousands of lives on both sides, the forced migration of thousands of people, and the destruction of homes and entire villages, and in this respect, the Kurdish Question cannot be defined simply as a political problem.

A war has been raging between the Turkish army and *Kurdistan Workers' Party* (PKK) [*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan]* guerrillas in Eastern Turkey for thirty years, but towards the end of the 1990s, conflict also permeated into the western part of the country. Just after the turn of the century, what had only been a military clash between state soldiers and guerrillas was transformed into a civilian conflict. The Kurdish Question became a permanent item on the agenda of both individuals and armed groups, and 'recently, the problem appears to risk transforming into heightened tension - and even a clash - between Turks and Kurds' (Ensaroglu and Kurban, 2008: 12). Political discussions aimed at identifying the roots of the clash, analysing the political situation and criticising the policies of the institutions considered responsible, including Parliament, the government and the army, became an intrinsic part of everyday life in Turkey, and discussions could be heard related to the issue in coffee shops, schools, workplaces, homes, and even between children. Thousands of families had to deal with the sorrow of personal loss as a result of the conflict, and it became impossible to see this issue as a distinct political question that could be solved by politicians and the army. In other words, a significant portion of society has suffered first-hand the consequences of the war, and everyone in the country has a great awareness of the war and has their own ideas about it.

In a study that aims to examine the encounters between individuals in everyday life through personal narratives, it might be appropriate to make a broad summary of the history of Turkish nationalism and the Kurdish Question. In order to understand the recent character of the Kurdish Question and the appearance of the problem in the everyday lives of ordinary people, it is necessary to revisit some of the turning points in the Kurdish Question, including the particular moments in which the Kurdish Question came face-to-face with Turkish nationalism. The main aim in this chapter is thus to make visible the transformation of the Kurdish Question from a political issue between Kurds and the State into a social problem between the Kurds and Turks, as well as the current situation and possible outcomes of this transformation. I will begin by presenting a short summary of the basic patterns of Turkish nationalism, after which I will move on to the Kurdish Question, situating it within a broad picture of nationalism.

1.1. Emergence of the Kurdish Question: The Late Ottoman Era

The roots of the Kurdish Question can be traced back to the pre-Turkish State. The nineteenth century, in what would be the latter decades of the Ottoman Empire, witnessed the initial insurrections of Kurds who had been living under the rule of the Empire for six centuries. Barkey and Fuller (1998) suggest that broad changes occurred over three periods: (i) First, the pre- and early independence years of 1920–1939; (ii) second, the 1950s, with the transition to multi-party rule; (iii) and finally, the 1980s, during which the Kurdish Question underwent a significant transformation and gained its current character. Kurdish political organisations and movements emerged in different forms and followed different objectives during all these three periods, and the most prominent factor in the emergence of the Kurdish Question was the imposition of national identities by new multi-ethnic countries,[2] including Syria, Iran and Iraq, and the denial of the Kurdish identity in these new constructions (Abbas, 1998: 82).

[2] Kurds lived under the rule of the Ottoman and Persian Empires for the five hundred years preceding the 20th century. With the establishment of nation states in the region, the Empire was divided into Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria (Barkey and Fuller, 1998: 2).

In the Ottoman Empire, society was defined according to religious affiliation rather than nationality (Abu Jaber, 1967: 213), in what is known as the 'millet' system. In this system, which operated for six centuries, no ethno-linguistic or racial hierarchy existed (Yegen, 1999: 557), although there was religious stratification. Society was composed of Muslims and non-Muslims, according to which, the Kurds, like other Muslim groups such as Circassians, Slavs, Arabs, Bosnians, Turks, and, were thus not a minority, but rather a component of the *ummet*[3] (Saracoglu, 2009: 63). In this hierarchy, Sunni Muslims[4] could take their place in the Ottoman bureaucracy regardless of their ethnic background. Only non-Muslims were recognised officially as a minority. In the Ottoman Empire, being a Sunni Muslim was seen as sufficient to be treated equally as a subject of the Sultan.

Although ethnicity was not a politicised issue in the social structure of the Ottoman Empire, it did increase in significance during the *Tanzimat*[5] period. As Shaw and Shaw (1977) point out, with the Tanzimat Reforms, control over the hinterland of the Empire became weaker and 'nationalistic elements among the subject minorities, nourished and sustained by Western powers and Russia, demanded autonomy or independence from the Empire' (1977: vii). At the end of the nineteenth century, a number of rapidly growing nationalist independence movements began to emerge among the Christian populations, such as the Serbs, Greeks, Bulgarians and Armenians, and this highlighted the importance of such factors as mixed communities and threats from other aggressive nationalist groups (Poulton, 1997: 62–63). The emergence and spread of Armenian and Greek nationalism in Anatolia and the loss of the Balkans triggered the rise of consciousness of Turkish nationalism.

[3] Ummet means 'community' in Arabic, although in common usage it refers to an Islamic community.

[4] Besides Sunni, the dominant Islamic sect in Turkey, Hanafi, Maliki, Hanbali and Safii are the other sects in Islam.

[5] Tanzimat (Reorganisation) occurred during the 1839–1876 period, and refers to a set of reforms aimed at modernising and replacing such institutions as the army and the education system.

Within the new political turmoil that was raging in the Tanzimat period, centralisation, in an attempt to prevent the collapse of the Empire, created discomfort in the Kurdish areas, provoking around fifty revolts (Barkey and Fuller, 1998:7). During the same period the Alevi, 'who belonged to a sect that was separate from Sunni orthodoxy and represented the Turkish version of Shi'ism' (Sakallıoglu, 1996:233), emerged as an 'other'. For the Tanzimat reforms, aiming at the centralisation of the Empire, possible Shi'i subversion was regarded as a threat to the Empire, which was dominated by orthodox Sunni-Islam.

Alevis are not Sunnis and they define themselves as Shi'is (Yocum, 2005:583). Alevism spread particularly among the impoverished nomadic and semi-nomadic Kurdish and Turkish tribes (Bilici, 1998: 61); and the large Alevi groups are Turkish or Kurdish native speakers (Bruinessen, 1996: 7). The religious doctrine of the sect is Sunni-based; however, there are aspects of the two faiths that are somewhat different. While a Sunni Muslim prays in a mosque and practises the five conditions of Islam: belief in the one God; prayer five times a day; giving of alms; keep the fast in the month of Ramazan; and making the pilgrimage to Mecca; the religious doctrine of the Alevi sect is based on Bektasi tariqas[6] which is attributed to İmam Cafer. In the Sunni sect, the prophet of Islam is Muhammed, while for the Alevi, Muhammed's son-in-law Ali is regarded as God. Furthermore, the Alevi do not believe in the Kuran, do not pray in the mosques, do not fast at Ramazan or go to Mecca (Shankland, 2003: x). Alevis supported a secularist state idea wholeheartedly in order to avoid the discrimination they experienced in Ottoman term. It is also asserted that the state never declared that the Turkish state against faith totally. After the 1950's and to the multi-party period, re-Islamification of the state emerged (Shankland, 2003:14-15) and stands as state heritage even today. A sunni-Muslim dominated state mind marked Alevis as the other within the Republic as well. Alevi revolts and harsh suppression executed by the state shows the Alevi's disadvantaged position in Turkey.[7]

[6] Tariqa is the term referring different schools or orders in Islam.

[7] Kurdish Alevis rebelled in 1920 and 1937-38 against the Kemalist movement and the Republic, although they never joined forces in significant numbers with Sunni Kurds against the government (Bruinessen, 1998: 7). Clashes also occurred between Sunnis and Alevis in Kahramanmaras in 1979

Unrest among minorities throughout the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 shifted the whole political agenda, and the 'others' of the Ottoman Empire became salient. During this period almost all of the Balkan territories with around four million inhabitants – were lost (Zurcher, 2004: 108). In this political atmosphere, such organisations as *Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* [Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)] and Young Turks[8] were established aiming 'to return to the constitutional rule that the Sultan had abrogated' (Barkey and Fuller, 1998: 8). The main ideological goal was the defence of 'Turkism'; however, two other 'policy strategies' came to dominate the agenda: Ottomanism and Islamism. Ottomanism was designed to keep the Christian minorities integrated into the existing system, with emphasis on the equality of all "Ottoman citizens"' (Zurcher, 2000: 153); while Islamism aimed at unifying all Islamic minorities and developing relationships with other Islamic countries. The common aim was the most prominent problem of this period: how to save the Empire. As Ozkirimli and Sofos (2008: 28-29) observe, both Ottomanism and Islamism failed, and a nation state project based on Turkishness became dominant among the political elite. The main aim was:

> *"Uniting all Turks living in the Ottoman Empire through bonds of ethnicity and religion ... other non-Turkish Muslim groups who had already been Turkified to a certain extent would be further assimilated" (2008: 33).*

1.1.1. Sevres Treaty: A Penetrated Syndrome

Following World War I, the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the signing of the Sevres Treaty[9] in 1920 were key milestones for the future of the Kurds, the Kurdish

---

and in Corum in 1980, and in the incendiarism in Sivas in 1992, and the riots in Istanbul (Gaziosmanpasa) in 1995 which were supressed by the state armed forces. In all of these cases, Alevis were killed, assassinated and forced to migrate, whereas Sunnis were protected by the state.

8 Young Turks was a group of reformist army officers and urban intellectuals who were progressive, modernist and opposed to the status quo.

9 The Treaty of Sevres was signed on 10 August 1920 in Sevres, France, as a treaty of peace between the principal Allied Power (excluding Russia and United States) and the Ottoman Empire (Montgomery, 2009: 775).

Question and Turkish nationalism. The Treaty was never ratified due to the War of Independence under the leadership of Ataturk against the Sultan and the occupying Western powers. After the nationalist victory over the Greeks and the overthrow of the Sultan, Ataturk's government had the opportunity to request a new peace treaty: the Treaty of Lausanne signed in 1923 after the War of Independence by the Turkish Republic and the Allied powers. The Lausanne Treaty defined the rights and freedoms for non-Muslim minorities in the new Turkish Republic (Bayar, 2013: 108). In this Treaty, only non-Muslim groups were defined as minorities, in both the state Constitution and in international law (Gurbey, 1990: 11), and only the minority rights of the non-Muslim residents of Istanbul were recognised. All of the other ethnic minority groups, such as the Bosnians, Albanians, Georgians, Laze, Circassians and other non-Turkish Muslims living in all around the Turkey, were accepted as Turks and became assimilated during the Republic period (Ergil, 2000: 125). However the social structure that Lausanne Treaty presented created a hierarchy of citizens. Especially Armenian and Greek Orthodox populations are marked as suspect populations and the integration into the new nation was denied (Bayar, 2013: 109). Assimilative and discriminatory executions of the state created tragic ends the stories of the non-Muslim citizens in the territory that they had lived for centuries. As Icduygu et.al. state "the emigration of non-Muslim minorities has taken a central place in creating a Turkish nation united in ethno-cultural terms" (2008:359). So the population exchange agreements that were made with Bulgaria and Greece in 1913, 47.000 Bulgarians and 100.000 Anatolian Greeks left Anatolia and emigrated to their "national states". Also during the Armenian deportation held in 1915 which turned out to be a genocide, thousands of Armenians were forced to emigrate (2008: 364).

The Treaty of Sevres was of great importance for the Kurds living in Anatolia. As it was stated in the Treaty;

> *"If within one year from the coming into force of the present Treaty the Kurdish peoples within the areas defined in Article 62 shall address themselves to the Council of the League of Nations in such a manner as to show that a majority of the population of these areas desires independence from Turkey, and if the Council then considers*

> *that these peoples are capable of such independence and recommends that it should be granted to them, Turkey hereby agrees to execute such a recommendation, and to renounce all rights and title over these areas" (The peace Treaty of Sevres, Article 64[10]).*

The term 'Sevres Syndrome'[11], which refers to the basic patterns of recent Turkish nationalism, including suspicion that the West intends to dismantle Turkey, has its roots in this Treaty. The idea of a possible internal revolt supported by external forces revived fears of disintegration during these years. Serdar Kaya (2012) asserts that the narrative of Turkish nationalism communicates a 'Hobbesian world' in which Turks are at war with almost everyone else. That is why in this scenario, Turks are compelled to be on the alert for the threat of external enemies who aim to separate the country, as they did in the past. Through this narrative, fear of disintegration is triggered, and paranoia about a possible return to the 'Treaty of Sevres' is kept alive (Kaya, 2012: 148). Although official written history of the new republic ignores its Ottoman heritage, it retains from the Ottoman era the notion of betrayal from insider elements such as the Armenians, Greeks and other non-Muslim groups who lived for centuries in the Ottoman territory. Every single Turkish citizen has been taught and has memorised that during the War of Independence, the struggle was against both internal and external enemies. This part of collective memory stems from the idea that "Muslims (and ethnically Turkish citizens) are the 'true owners of the nation' while the non-Muslim citizens [remain] suspect" (Bayar, 2013:122). So it is possible to say that the belief referring to the notion that there was no way the Ottoman Empire would have collapsed if the external forces had received no help from internal traitors, has a great importance in the collective memory of Turkish society.

While the Sevres Syndrome focused on non-Muslim elements in the Empire as possible traitors, the pledge made to the Kurds in the Treaty of Serves emerged as a threat that may lead to the 'disintegration of the country'. However, the outbreak of war in Asia Minor delayed Kurdish-Turkish conflict for a short period of time.

---

[10] Retrieved from http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Section_II,_Annex_II,_and_Articles_261_-_433

11 For detailed information, see Guida (2008) and Kirisci (2004).

Despite the promises of the Treaty of Serves, during the War of Independence Kurds and Turks fought together, and the 'commonality of the struggle and the brotherhood of the two people were stressed by K. Ataturk' (Barkey and Fuller, 1998: 9). This was the moment that the narrative of the Islamic brotherhood and the common struggle between Kurds and Turks was introduced.

1.2. A secularist Nation State: The Turkish Republic

1.2.1 Denial of Ottoman Heritage

After victory in the War of Independence in 1923, the Turkish nation state was established under the leadership of M. Kemal Ataturk. As Ataturk was a member of the military, the founding position of the military and militarism became determining factors in all spheres of the newly established republic. The main principle of the new state was denial of Ottoman heritage, according to Islamic order of the Ottoman era was abolished and society was reformulated with predominantly Western influence. While the trend of Westernisation had already begun in the latter years of the Empire, in the new republic the aim was 'reaching the level of contemporary civilisations'[12].

Policies and reforms introduced in the following years were designed to modernise and Westernise society within the frame of Turkism. The texts of Ziya Gokalp (1968), a sociologist who had been influenced by the writings of Durkheim, inspired the politics of the new republic. He wrote that the new society should be organised with three main influences: Turkism, Islamism and Westernism. According to Gokalp, 'the mission of Turkism is to seek out the Turkish culture that has remained only among the people, and to graft into it onto Western civilization in its entirety and in a viable form' (Gokalp, 1968: 33). 'While Gokalp emphasised religion, ethics, aesthetics and socialization as the denominators of the nation, the Kemalists saw ethnicity as the underlying factor of Turkishness' (Cagaptay, 2004:97).

[12] This expression is from the Decennial Speech of M. K. Ataturk that was given in the course of the celebrations of the tenth year of the Turkish Republic.

In the single Party system of 1919–1946, the Republican People's Party (RPP) aimed to create a new ideology, structuring the Turkish nation-state around a kind of Turkishness and extreme nationalism, referred to as 'Kemalism' (Gurbey, 1990: 10). The Ideology of Kemalism was declared in the Third Party Congress of the RPP, where its six principles were stated: republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, secularism and revolutionism/reformism (Kadioglu, 1996: 187).

The most important reform was the abolition of Islamic institutions associated with the Ottoman era. As stated above, Islam was the most significant element in the bringing together of Kurds and Turks. As Yegen (1999) affirms, the abolition of the Caliphate can be regarded as the end of the brotherhood of all Muslims regardless of ethnic origin (1996: 559). The aggressive secularist reforms executed by the administrative cadres, such as the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, brought unease to Kurdish groups. Other steps taken during the 1920s and 1930s in a bid to secularise the Republic included 'the abolition of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations, the abolition of religious courts, the proscription of male religious headgear, namely the fez, the dissolution of the dervish orders, the reform of the calendar- and the adoption of the Swiss Civil Code, followed in 1928 by the adoption of the Latin alphabet' (Kadioglu, 1996: 186).

This formulation of the new state went against the promise made by Ataturk to the Kurds before the War of Independence that a state would be established in the Islamic order (Barkey and Fuller, 1998: 9). Ataturk[13] declared the new policy in the introduction of the Constitution in 1923:

> *"Our state is a nation state. It is not a multi-national state. The state does not recognise any nation other than Turks. There are other peoples that come from different races [ethnic groups] and who should have equal rights within the country; yet it is not possible to give rights to these people in accordance with their racial [ethnic] status" (cited in Yegen, 2009: 599).*

[13] Mustafa Kemal, Eskisehir-Izmit Konusmaları (1923) [Eskisehir-Izmit Speeches (1923)]

By the 1920's, a series of Kurdish revolts were initiated by the Revolt of Kocgiri (1921), beginning with the Shayk Said revolt in February 1925, which triggered other revolts in Kurdish cities. In response, the government passed the Law for the Maintenance of Order (Takrir'i Sukun Kanunu) in March 1925 (Kadioglu, 1996: 187), and its sweeping powers were exercised violently in the Kurdish region over the following four years. The Revolt of Shaykh Said of Palu was the first insurrection against Ankara in this period. As Barkey and Fuller (1998: 11) state, "It was as much a revolt against the secularist and anti-Islamic tendencies of the new regime as it was the first stirrings, albeit regionally circumscribed, of Kurdish nationalism (1998: 11).

Over the following months it became clear that the revolt had resulted in a much harsher execution of Ataturk's secularist plans, and the suppression of the religious order increased (Lewis, 1961: 261). However, these revolts targeting the policies on religious and ethnicity of the new nation state did not create a prejudiced idea towards Kurds in the society. However, for the first time, Kurds are regarded by the State as a group tending to threaten the unity of the new nation state. Ismet Inonu, who was Prime Minister at the time, summarised the official position of the state in 1925 as follows:

> *"We are, frankly, nationalists ... and nationalism is our only factor of cohesion. In the face of a Turkish majority other elements have no kinds of influence. We must Turkify the inhabitants of our land at – any price, and we will annihilate those who oppose the Turks or 'le turquisme" (cited in Lazreg, 2008: 6).*

In its early years, the government of the new republic launched a project to transform the economic, political and ideological structures as part of a large-scale modernisation movement. The 'new' history of the Turkish Republic was written by the Society for the Study of Turkish History (*Turk Tarihini Tetkik Cemiyeti)* and the Society for the Study of the Turkish Language *(Turk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti),* established in 1931, whose mandate was 'the institutionalisation of Turkishness'. Their main duty was to conduct pseudo-scientific research, seeking to prove that the Turks are one of the oldest civilisations in Anatolia, and that all Muslim ethnic groups in Turkey are descendants of Turks (Cagaptay, 2006; Poulton, 1997;

Saracoglu, 2010). Although the idea of building a nation state under the name of 'Turkey' was an appealing project for the intellectuals and politicians of the time, the creation of a unified national identity in the territory of Anatolia, in which several ethnic and religious minority groups were settled, would prove to be quite a challenge. Assimilation policies were required to erase the differences between these groups and to construct a common identity as a prerequisite for a new powerful nation; however, while the strategy of unification was successful among such minority groups as the Laz, Adyghe/Cerkez and Arabs, it did not work for the Kurds, and the Kurdish revolts initiated in the late Ottoman period were suppressed, covered up and denied for decades.

Constitutional amendments underlined the requirements for being a citizen of the Turkish Republic, and in the law enacted in 1926, being a Turkish ethnically became a requirement for state employees (Yegen, 2004: 56). The only way for Kurds to adopt the new citizenship was by denying their own ethnic identity, and as a result of the Kurdish revolts against this legislation, the new Turkish state's policies of assimilation and homogenisation were enhanced. Accordingly, the Turkification of the multi-ethnic and linguistically distinct groups remained a highly challenging issue, particularly when it came to the Kurds (Zeydanioglu, 2009: 5). As Ergil asserts,

> *"The Kurds, cut off from the rest (eastern and south-eastern parts) of the country by their remote location in the mountainous south-eastern regions, divided along tribal lines, and economically dependent on local landed elites, remained largely unaffected by the new regime's policies of assimilation and modernisation" (2000: 125).*

In the transforming discourse of the Republic, the Kurds were neither Muslim subjects of the Sultanate nor a distinct component of the Muslim nation as an individual ethnic and racial group. The Kurds had been the *ummet* of the Sultan in an Islamic Empire, but were redefined as 'prospective Turks' that could be assimilated into the Turkish nation in the new republic period (Yegen, 2006:3). The Kemalist definition of the Turkish nation left no room for the expression or practice of cultural

differences; and any such actions implying a Kurdish identity was forbidden and persecuted (Gurbey, 1990: 10). In 1967 it was declared:

> *"It is illegal and forbidden to introduce to, or distribute in, the country, materials in the Kurdish language of foreign origin in any form published, recorded, taped or material in similar form" (Official Gazette, no. 1Z577 of 14 February 1967).*

According to Hirschler's Kurdish historiography of Turkey, while the succeeding period referred to the pre- and early era of the Republic, the second period occurred from the 1940s–1950s, and a period of inactivity followed in the Kurdish movement until the end of the 1960s (2001: 146). The transition to a multi-party system and the coming to power of the Democrat Party after 1950 brought relative comfort to the Kurdish region due to policies aimed to de-escalate the secularist policies. The efforts of the government to create a 'local bourgeoisie' around the country was another development from which the Kurds benefited, and in the same period, hundreds of thousands of Kurds emigrated to western cities where jobs could more easily be found (McDowall, 2004: 403). McDowall asserts that the disruption of pastoralism in the region in the course of the revolts during the 1930s was another reason for this emigration (2004: 403).

In parallel with the global political transformations of the 1970s, Turkey also witnessed a rapid proliferation of left-wing groups. Hirschler asserts that during the 1960s and 1970s, the Kurdish movement was motivated by class struggle that was articulated by the other Marxist movements in Turkey (Hirschler, 2001: 146), although this does not mean that all Kurds supported leftist politics. As McDowall (2004) asserts, while the Kurds were marked as hostile to right-wing groups, considerable numbers joined far right groups such as '"Idealists" (Ulkuculer), also known as "Grey Wolves", (Bozkurtlar), who were associated with the National Action Party' (2004: 413).

The existing political climate provided political space for workers, public servants, students and minority groups, and many leftist and rightist groups crystallised within a lot of factions. However, during the late 1970s political violence became a real

problem. A number of young groups on the political left, and the Grey Wolves and the fundamentalists on the right, fought for control of the political arena. Towns, districts and neighbourhoods became political zones linked to particular factions of leftist and nationalist groups. In other words, society became split between leftists and nationalists. Besides the split that took place within society, as Yegen states, the 'others' of 'Turkish nationalism were not the Kurds, but rather non-Muslimhood, communism and Alevis' (2007: 135).

1.3. Turning Point: 1980s and 1990s

During the 1980s, attempts were made to suppress political activity and to transform what had become a highly politicised society into a non-political one. Both leftist and nationalist groups (although not equally) were purged from the political sphere in a third coup d'état[14] on 12 September 1980.

The 12 September coup, the third military coup staged in Turkey, was the one which made the most devastating impact on Turkish society. After the coup was staged, hundreds of thousands of people were arrested, imprisoned and forced to become refugees if they were lucky enough to escape the torture and maltreatment which prevailed in prisons. The Coup was actually a step taken towards Turkey's neo-liberalisation. The statist economic policy was replaced by an export-promoting, free market economy. On the political side, the Turkish-Islam synthesis became the central ideological point of reference. Left-wing politics and the labour movement were harshly oppressed as they were thought to threaten the neo-liberal transformation. The 12 September is probably the most significant event in Turkey's near history and one that made the deepest mark upon the country's economic, political and social structure[15].

14 There have been three military coups in the history of the Republic of Turkey. The first was staged by a group of Turkish army officers against the democratically elected government of the Democratic Party on 27 May 1960, which ended with the execution of the prime minister and two deputy prime ministers. The second was in 1971, when the government had become weakened by defections and seemed to have become paralysed, leading the Chief of General Staff on 12 March 1971 to hand the prime minister a memorandum that was effectively an ultimatum from the armed forces (Zurcher, 2004: 258).

15 For a detailed discussion on 12 September coup see Boratav (1991),Demirel (2003), Bora and Can (2007), Orhon (2013).

Besides the collective trauma that the coup created, the 1980s was a period in which economic, social and political realms were redefined in Turkey. Understanding the characteristics of recent political and social trends is possible only by looking at the 1980 coup and the 1980s in general. After the 1980 coup, new right-wing politics were constructed through the articulation of the idea of 'synthesis of Turk-Islam', which was accompanied by the dominant discourse of Ozal and the Anavatan Party (Motherland Party). Nationalism, Conservatism, and Islamism were the three main inclinations of Turkish right-wing politics, along with Kemalism as the indicator of an official ideology. This was unprecedented. As Kadioglu states:

> *"The political climate that prevailed in the 1980s and the early 1990s has opened the Kemalist Pandora's box, out of which emerged multiple identities of Islam and the Kurds" (Kadioglu, 1996: 192).*

The Coup of 1980 can be regarded as an effort to demolish the leftist and radical nationalist political movements from the political arena, because of the supposed separatist intentions of these political ideologies. However, as Kadioglu states, by the policies executed through the Coup period came the creation of a new political atmosphere for the new identities based on religion, ethnicity, gender and so forth. The scope of the socio-political movements of the society shifted from a class based formation to identity politics. The Kurdish movement is also transformed from a class based movement into a movement based on an identity politics by and just after the Coup period.

It is evident that the empowerment of nationalist discourse and nationalism has been on the rise since the 1980s and 1990s, though gradually (Bora, 1994 and 2006). In addition to the growth of self-confidence on which such discourses as the great and powerful Turkey and the notion that the 21st century would be the Turkish one developed, the post-1980 period saw the popularisation of neo-liberal politics via the media. The Gulf War was also influential in this, as a turning point towards an atmosphere of self-confidence and optimism, rather than one rife with anxiety and threat. This development coincided with a wave of nationalism in the Post-Soviet Turkic Republics that inspired the dream of unification of the Turkic states and Turkey (Kushner, 1997: 227-8).

Within this Coup atmosphere, Kurds are signed as the 'other' by the state. Kenan Evren, 7th President of Turkey, from 1982–1989, led the third coup of the Turkish Republic on 12 September 1980, claiming that the 'Kurds are a subgroup of Turks living up in the snow-covered mountains and the word "Kurd" comes from the sound "kart kurt", which is made while walking on the snow.' This approach steered the perception of the general public towards the Kurds and formed the basic elements of the official discourse of the Kurdish Question after the 1980s. It was interpreted in popular discourse that since there is no Kurdish nation, there can be no Kurdish Question. The strategy of denial held its place in political discourse for many years, but the dynamics changed after the 1990s. As Updegraff summarises:

> *"Turkish state policy towards the Kurds… has been evolved from denial and mandatory assimilation to cultural recognition to acknowledgement of the Kurds' contested status as a political problem demanding political solutions" (2012: 119).*

These socio-economic and international changes played a key role in the dissemination of the nationalist movement during the 1980s. Besides the increasing trend of self-awareness of ethnic identities, 'economic deprivation, social injustice and physical displacement combined in the late 1970s to create the conditions for revolt' (McDowall, 2004: 404). The torture and ill-treatment that Kurds faced in Diyarbakır Prison during the coup regime also provided a legitimate and concrete reason for the establishment of the Kurdish movement. Diyarbakir Prison was a 'specially designed' place by the 12 September coup for intimidating the members of the Kurdish-left wing organisations. It is widely known that torture and maltreatment prevailed in all prisons throughout the coup years, but Diyarbakir Prison deserves special mention as the violent practice towards its detainees was unprecedented and unparalleled. The treatment of the detainees went far beyond humanity and human dignity. Besides tens of 'specifically thought' torture methods, the detainees here were forced to eat faeces and soak in sewages. These experiences of the Kurdish left-wing individuals are usually regarded as one of the triggers for the consolidation of Kurdish political movement and the establishment of PKK.

Within this political atmosphere, the neo-Marxist PKK was founded by Ankara University student Abdullah Ocalan in 1978. The stated objective at its founding was 'the establishment of a socialist Kurdish state in the south-east of the country' (Zurcher, 2004: 264). In 1984, the PKK launched an armed struggle against the Turkish Army that would see several attacks and clashes taking place over the following decade. This became the longest armed Kurdish rebellion in the history of the Turkish Republic. By the mid-1990s, the declared aim of the Kurdish movement was a more flexible mandate of 'possible solutions within a democratic Turkey' after violent clashes between the Turkish army and Kurdish guerrillas (Pusane, 2014: 83).

Turkish nationalism presented the Kurdish Question as the most important 'other' when defining itself. With regard to the situation of the Kurds, the coup administration's ethnic nationalism was as crude as it had been in the 1930s and 1940s, with a dominant Kemalist hegemony, along with novel articulations related to Islamism and nationalism. The aggressive and destructive nationalist actions of the state caused the growth of the Kurdish movement. Following the coup period, speaking, writing and broadcasting in the Kurdish language was prohibited, and anybody caught referring to the Kurds as a distinct group was arrested (Kirisci and Winrow, 1997: 111). While the ban was lifted in 1991, 'everything published in Kurdish remains under close official scrutiny' (Ergil, 2000: 126).

These dynamics characterised the political atmosphere of the 1990s, when the Kurdish Question became a permanent item on the agenda in Turkey. Certain trends had a decisive impact on Turkish politics, and these include the social atmosphere after the signing of the Customs Union Pact; the economic crisis; the strategies of the General Staff related to the Kurdish Question: the '28 February crisis', or so-called 'Post Modern Military Intervention' carried out by the General Staff against the government in 1997: the internal war between the Turkish military and the PKK: and the arrest of the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan. These events provoked the rise of a nationalist conservative ideology in 1980, and all can be considered breaking points that spurred the formation of a new structure in which nationalism was reproduced according to another 'other'. Throughout the 1990s, the 'Kurdish regions

were the subject of an emergency decree, a regionally specific legal system, state military control and, at the same time, economic neglect' (Gurbey, 1990: 13).

Until the 1990s, use the word of 'Kurd' was taboo in both political and public spheres. The word 'Kurd' was first pronounced by the eighth president of Turkey, Turgut Ozal, in February 1991, who introduced a draft bill into the Assembly to repeal Law 2932 in order to lift the ban of use of Kurdish except in broadcasts, publications and education (McDowwall, 2004: 431). Ozal launched discussions about a possible federal system, and in 'initiated secret dialogue with the Iraqi Kurdish leaders and arranged indirect meetings with the PKK leader Ocalan' (Pusane, 2014: 83). His death in 1993 is still considered to be an assassination in response to his plan to address the Kurdish Question[16].

From the mid-1920s until the end of the 1980s, the Turkish state 'assumed' that there was no Kurdish element on Turkish territory (Yegen, 1996: 216). The intention in this regard was not to exclude the Kurds from Turkish society systematically, on either an ethnic or racial basis, but rather 'to assimilate and integrate them into a glorified "Turkish" nation' (Saracoglu, 2010: 92). The Turkish state continued to employ its traditional assimilationist strategy when dealing with the PKK throughout the 1980s and 1990s. 'In accordance with its traditional discourse, the state denied the "Kurdish" dimension of the PKK problem and reduced it to a problem of "economic underdevelopment", "terrorism", and "the external interventions of enemy countries"' (Saracoglu, 2010: 95).

In 1999, Turkey started to be more responsive regarding its assimilationist strategy when it became a candidate for European Union membership. The European Union integration process forced the Turkish state to reform its constitutional and political system, according to which the Kurds gained some cultural rights, such as the right

16 On the nineteenth anniversary of his death, investigators wanted to exhume Ozal's body to test for poisoning. In September 2012, a court ruled that the grave should be opened for another autopsy, and the exhumation took place on 3 October 2012. The autopsy report issued on 12 December 2012 stated that the body contained poison, and said the cause of death was unclear.

to open private institutions for the teaching of Kurdish, and to broadcast in their mother tongue. Although positive steps, these legal regulations did not constitute a fundamental transformation in the approach of the state, nor did they lead to a change in the general perception of Kurds in Turkish society. As Kurban states, 'for the Turkish mind set, granting Kurds a few rights was a concession worth making in the name of being accepted into the club of developed nations' (Kurban, 2013: 2). In addition, the clause stated in the European Court of Human Rights preventing the death penalty for Ocalan, who was captured in 1999, created widespread disappointment in Turkish society. However, a truce between the PKK and the Turkish state was declared just after Ocalan's capture, which provided an opportunity to resolve the Kurdish Question politically rather than militarily.

1.3.1. 1.3.1 Migrations and Forced Migration: A Possibility for Daily Encounters between Kurds and Turks

Besides the losses on both sides, the forced migration of the Kurds from their homelands to urban areas, and especially to the western part of the country, added another layer to the problem. Any social researcher attempting to understand the relationship between Kurds and Turks and everyday life in Turkey cannot overlook the subject of migration, which provided the opportunity for Turkish and Kurdish groups to encounter each other physically. The western and southern cities became the scene of various interactions between Kurdish and Turkish people, which allowed them to experience cohabitation and to make inferences about each other. Most of the time this migration was one sided, involving the massive movement of the Kurdish population from the eastern province to the western and southern provinces.

The resettlement of the Kurds was not only a phenomenon of the late 1980s and after in Turkey. As Ergil states, as a result of the mounting casualties in the east of the country, the state put in place evacuation policies (2000: 125). After the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925, the first large-scale Kurdish nationalist uprising, the Turkish state

forced the leading families/tribes involved in the rebellion to settle in Western Anatolia (Yegen, 1999:561). This was the first compulsory migration of Kurdish people in the history of the Turkish Republic. McDowall suggests that the disruption of pastoralism by the state in the course of the revolts of 1930s brought about mass migration (2004: 403).

Besides the forced migration after the Sheikh Said rebellion, it is necessary to explain the two other significant migrations that determined the recent political and social structure of Turkey's larger cities. The migration wave of the 1960s and 1970s was a voluntary, economically-motivated rural–urban migration (Saracoglu, 2010: 189–190) from underdeveloped regions of the country to more industrialised settlements. Besides these economically motivated migrations, thousands of rural Kurdish communities were forcibly displaced in the 1980s and 1990s, by the army and the PKK. Much of the countryside in the south-east was depopulated as Kurdish civilians moved to more defensible centres in eastern cities, as well as to the cities of western Turkey and Western Europe. 'By the mid-1990s, more than 3,000 villages had been virtually wiped from the map, and, according to official figures, 378,335 Kurdish villagers had been displaced and left homeless'[17]. According to Koc *et al.* (2008) a significantly high percentage of the Kurdish population now lives in the west region – in 1965, the Kurdish speaking population constituted less than 1 percent of the population in the western provinces and 5 percent in the southern provinces, but by 2003 there had been a sevenfold increase of Kurds in the west (2008: 450).

Besides the changing nature of, and motivations for migration, the general profile of migrants also changed. With the arrival of new migrant groups in the western and southern cities, the perception of Kurdishness, along with other political factors, changed. Unlike the first migration, the second was sudden, and the migrants had no time to arrange anything before moving out. Nor did they get any social or economic assistance from the state in the process. As Ciplak (2012) states:

17 Retrieved from http://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/turkey0305/3.htm#_Toc97005223.

> "... after moving to the cities, they [second immigrant group] found themselves uneducated, unskilled and poor, making them very prone to victimization. … They experienced a wide range of problems such as joblessness and housing" (2012: 26-27).

Under these conditions, the Kurds began the joining of, and establishing of organised crime networks, engaged in selling drugs, prostitution, begging, etc. These informal networks, which were generally managed by the Kurdish mafia, provided sufficient ground for the Turks to develop negative ideas about Kurds and make generalisations about the entire Kurdish community. In anti-Kurdish discourse, people ignore the poverty and class aspect of the situation. Many Turkish people believe that Kurdish people take part in these criminal activities not because of poverty, but because they are naturally inclined towards laziness, criminality and disloyalty (Saracoglu, 2009: 652). All Kurdish people are seen as terrorists, bent on separating the Turkish State, or potential terrorists who already have sympathy towards the PKK. On the other hand, one aggressive nationalist reaction created counter-nationalist movements, and unsurprisingly, Kurdish people started to feel pressure, believing that Turkish people wanted to destroy them. They therefore feel the need to protect themselves and to be prepared for any possible attacks. It is obvious that cultural conflict is not sufficient to explain this rising hatred and prejudice between people.

Antipathy towards Kurdish people living in Western cities is argued in academic circles for a decade by the concepts of "pop(ular) nationalism" and "nationalism/racism" in Turkey. In this limited literature[18], the most important contribution has been made by Saracoglu (2009), through his conception of "exclusive recognition", which discusses the antipathy towards Kurdish immigrant living in Izmir. By his conceptualization of the everyday aspect of the conflict between Kurds and Turks, this is accentuated and analysed through the theoretical themes of neoliberalism, migration and negative perceptions about "experienced Other [Kurds]". Saracoglu states that

> *"…the concept of exclusive recognition helps to see the rising anti-migrant discourse imposed by the state or other political organization*

[18] Bora (2003), Bora and Can (2004), Saracoglu, (2009, 2011), Ozkirimli& Yumul (2000)

is not an ideology but a historically specific ethnicization process that takes place in the everyday life cities in Turkey" (2009: 640).

While there are several points which can be criticised, this research brought a new perspective to the understanding of the ways in which the Kurdish migrants have been identified in the middle-class discourse by certain pejorative labels and stereotypes. Unlike the work of Saracoglu, two sides of the interaction, both Kurds and Turks, are questioned in this research. While there are similarities between this research and Saracoglu's in terms of the theoretical perspectives of nationalism, the difference between the fields of the research provides some changes between the results of the two researches studies. As Saracoglu`s study demonstrates, (2009, 2010) any research on everyday life and the individuals are highly influenced by physical surrounding, context and interactional forms.

Until the army forced the migration of Kurds towards the West, the opportunities for Turks and Kurds to interact were very limited. Furthermore, until the 1990s, it was easy for the Turks to deny the existence of Kurds as an ethnic category. The collective memory was systematically restructured and reproduced in mainstream media during the late 1980s and 1990s through references to 'traumatic moments' in Turkey's history. Turks have been exposed to such distorted and restricted messages in the mainstream media; the majority had a very limited notion of what was really happening in the Kurdish 'region'. Kurds, however, experienced the bloodshed first-hand, or at least heard the experiences of their relatives and friends. By the 1990s, the civil war could no longer be covered up, especially after the increasing number of bodies of "martyrs" returning to their neighbourhoods.

1.4. Paradigmatic Change: 2000s

In the 2000s, with the transformation of the political landscape in the form of the deconstruction of the official state ideology by the Islamist conservative government, the Kurdish Question was carried to another level. In order to understand the 2000s in Turkey it is necessary to consider the Islamic focus that entered the political arena through Islamic Tariqas. A wide variety of religious

communities had become visible through the support of the state since the 1980 coup. Among nationalist discourses, a form of nationalism was employed by Islamist parties as the Welfare Party *(Refah Partisi)* and the Virtue Party *(Fazilet Partisi).* These were 'ornamented with progressivism emphases in which Turkey is designated as the potential leader of the Islamic World and confederation' (Insel, 2002; Bora, 1994; Sarıbay, 1985). The Justice and Development Party (JDP) [*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi]*, founded in 2001, won the 2002 General Elections, initiating an administration which continues at the time of writing. For Somer's the JDP,

> *"… is a pro-EU and pro-democracy party rooted in a moderate Islamist ideology and type of Turkish-Muslim nationalism which may prove to be more liberal and more respectful of ethnic diversity than defensive Turkish nationalism" (2008:221).*

The JDP initiated a reform process that made allowances for the cultural rights of Kurds. Emphasis on Islam provided room for bringing together Kurds and Turks, referring to an alleged Islamic brotherhood in Ottoman terms. In this regard the JDP was quite flexible in its first term in terms of cultural demands and human rights. The PKK's decision to end the ceasefire in 2004 changed this relatively positive situation[19], and before the General Election of 2007 a nationalist tendency was clear in both the political atmosphere and in the election campaigns.

The political moves made by this new 'conservative democratic' party were intended to challenge the secularist and militarist Kemalist ideology, and new approaches to the Kurdish Question during the JDP government's term in office were motivated by the deconstruction of that ideology. The Ergenokon[20] case, the largest legal case in the history of the Turkish state, showed clearly the government's aim to challenge Kemalism and the role of the army in Turkish politics. Although known widely as the 'Ergenekon case', the official name is the 'Case against the infringement of Article 313 of the Turkish Penal Code: the establishment of a criminal organisation'

[19] Retrieved from http://www.zaman.com.tr/gundem_pkkkadek-ateskese-fiilen-son-verdi_54788.html.

[20] Ergenekon refers to a valley in Central Asia that features in Turkic folklore as a place of sacred and mythical meaning. According to legend, a Turkic clan was guided to a safe haven ın the valley by a she-wolf named Asena (Unver, 2009: 2).

(Unver, 2009: 2). The case concerns an alleged ultra-nationalist organisation, known as 'the deep-state', composed of around 100 suspects from the armed forces and civil society organisations. While the roots of the organisation can be traced back to the late Ottoman era, since the mid-1990s it has referred to 'a deep-state organisation aiming to 'defend the regime against Islamist and anti-Kemalist movements'[21] (Balci and Jacoby: 2012: 137). Challenging the army and the deep-rooted administrative patterns of the state transformed the Turkish political narrative. The decreasing credibility of the army left room for criticisms of its activities in the Kurdish region over the past three decades, and revealed paramilitary operations in the region. While the army's activities did not come to an end, and seem unlikely to do so in the near future, the challenge to the army made it possible and legitimate to publically express the collective and personal experiences of the Kurds.

Although the Turkish state is taking 'historical' steps towards recognising certain political and cultural rights of the Kurds, a rising antagonistic discourse is becoming visible towards the Kurdish people in Turkish society. During the first term of the JDP government, Kurds were granted rights that they had long been denied. Prime Minister Erdogan announced that there were different ethnic sub-identities in Turkey, and that the common bond between the different ethnic groups was that they were all 'citizens of Turkey'. Recognising different ethnic elements was, in itself, a significant step away from the hegemonic Kemalist nationalist ideology. It also reflected an intention to change both the role of the military in politics and to change the official nationalist policy of the Turkish state. Here two processes must be explained if one is to understand the recent wave of nationalism. The first is the emergence of the JDP's aims to regulate the cultural and political rights of Kurds, described as the 'Kurdish/Democratic Expansion'. This began in 2009 with the launch of TRT[22] Ses, a Kurdish-language radio and television service. The government claimed that this project provided democratic rights to Kurds in Turkey, and expected it to lead to the disarmament of the PKK and agreement on a peaceful

[21] For detailed information about the Ergenekon case, see Balci and Jacoby (2012), Guida (2008), Unver (2009) and Kaya (2012), Efe and Yesiltas (2012).

[22] Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) Association is a state-owned public broadcasting service with 12 channels.

solution to the Kurdish Question. Furthermore, the government has put in place regulations related to the right to education and broadcasting in the mother tongue, offers of remission to some members of the PKK, and so forth. The second process was a referendum on a number of changes to the Constitution held on 12 September 2010. As Kalaycioglu states the referendum made visible the "main cultural cleavages between the more socio-cultural liberal and secular coastal provinces and the more religious conservative hinterland" (2012: 1). While the JDP and some other parties supported the "yes" vote, the biggest opposition party the Republican People Party, supported a "no" vote. The Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (PDP) [Baris ve Demokrasi Partisi] boycotted the referendum. Despite this boycott and the no notes, the results showed that the majority supported the constitutional amendments, with 58 percent for and 42 percent against.

Although the JDP had intended to take decisive steps to resolve the Kurdish Question, they instead spurred conflict between conservative Islamist groups and secularist republican military elements. The conflicting ideologies held by such groups were articulated with nationalism and its different forms, meaning that nationalism is defined and followed on different sides of the political field. The presidential election of 2007 was a prime example of this 'Secularist/Kemalist-Islamist' division in society. A series of 'Republican Meetings'[23] held before the presidential elections of July 22, 2007, were hosted by non-governmental organisations[24] and intended to encourage a nationalist, Kemalist pulse in society. Millions joined the meetings to show how Kemalist, secularist, modernist and nationalist they were (Yavuz and Ozcan, 2007:119). In this political atmosphere, the liberal-Islamist wing presented a more democratic and liberal nationalist perspective, while the Kemalist-Secularist wing became more ethnicist and discriminatory. In other words, the old-established divisions between conservatism, Kemalism and nationalism no longer held true.

[23] Republican meetings held in Istanbul, Ankara, Manisa, Canakkale, Izmir and Samsun and over a million people participated the meetings between 14 April- 20 May 2007.

[24] Organisations involved included the 'Association of Kemalist Idea' and 'Association in Support of Modern Life'.

The government's step towards recognising the Kurdish Question did not automatically yield democratic developments, as the Kurdish Question is still perceived as a 'terrorism problem' that can only be resolved by military means. The acceptance of the Kurdish Question by Erdogan and his party did not lead to a substantial change in political practices. Conservative and nationalist wings within the current government have prevented more significant transformations that may have contributed towards the resolution of the issue. Internal JDP conflicts undermined the Kurdish Expansion project, and a lack of consensus in Parliament. As a result, the Kurdish Expansion process failed to receive wide public support. The intended transformation was not accepted by Kemalist and nationalist elements, and the process was not considered promising, either by the Kurds or by leftist and socialist groups. Academicians, students and journalists are still being persecuted simply for recognising and conducting research on the Kurdish Question, with accusations that they support a terrorist organisation.

Although a vital transformation has occurred in the political discourse over the Kurdish Question, the hegemonic conservative discourse remains. '*One nation, one flag, and one state',* thus maintains the perspective of the Kemalist ideology and its assimilationist policies. While the Kemalists denied that the Kurds constituted a distinct ethnic group, recent state policies have tended to ignore ethnic differences and the political demands of the Kurds. As Erdogan stated, 'there is no Kurdish Question in Turkey, there is a PKK problem'[25].

Likely previous government, Kurdish Question is regarded as an economic underdevelopment and terror problem in JDP's rule period as well. However only the economic policies that JDP developed about the Kurdish region is different from the policies of previous governments'. Economic investments in the Kurdish region were seen as the only fundamental solution of the Question. An example was the project called The Project of South-Eastern Anatolia (GAP) [Guneydogu Anadolu Projesi] before JDP rule period. GAP, which is a counterinsurgency project,

[25]http://www.zaman.com.tr/politika_erdogan-kurt-sorunu-yok-teror-orgutu-pkk-sorunu-var_1297498.html

basically aimed to raise income levels and living standards by overcoming the structural difficulties in the region by agricultural production. (Yoruk and Ozsoy, 2013: 155). It was planned in the 1970s and still incomplete. Yoruk and Ozsoy state that there was a shift in state economic policies after the 2000s;

> *"JDP government has been withdrawing from its larger project of the economic development of the Kurdish region- a project that has served the state discourse to de-Kurdify the Kurdish conflict by reducing it to a techno-political issue of economic regulation rendering its ethno-political dimensions invisible" (2013:155).*

Yoruk and Ozsoy's study has a great importance in terms of the ethnic perspective they employed in order to analyse the economic policies of the recent government. They assert that by the new strategy of the JDP government rather than developing gigantic economic projects, social assistance, projects targeting poor Kurdish individuals are developed such as free health care, conditional cash transfers, food stamps, housing, education and disability aid for the poor (2013:155). This argument reveals that social assistance programs are designed in an ethnic based structure and basically target poor Kurds. According to their research, both Kurds living in the Kurdish region and Kurds settled down in the urban centres of the western part of the country have benefitted from these aids and "Kurds are almost twice as likely as non-Kurds to receive free health care cards" (2013: 156). Yoruk and Ozsoy state that these social assistance programs force poor Kurds to ignore their ethnic identities and prioritise their economic poverty. In this way, the government wants to achieve the erosion of the Kurdishness of the poor Kurds by making the poor Kurds merely poor (2013: 157).

Throughout the 2000s, Kurds demanded the right to education in their mother tongue, and the right to change the Turkified names of places and to include the letters q, x, and w which do not exist in the Turkish alphabet. While they sought to gain such rights through participation in parliamentary politics, because of the 10 percent electoral threshold, Kurdish candidates joined the elections independent of their party in 2007 and 2010.

The most prominent step towards appeasement taken by the government was to allow eight PKK militants from Iraqi Kurdistan to return to Turkey via the Habur border gate on 19 October 2009. While this was just the first step in a long-term 'return' project, the welcoming of the Kurdish groups by Kurdish people living on the Turkish side of the border provoked nationalist anger in Turkish society. The guerrilla clothes worn by the militants and their lack of remorse for their previous acts triggered a nationalist backlash in both the nationalist and conservative sections of society (Pusane, 2014: 86). The government was accused of 'giving in to terrorism' and allowing the PDP to 'propagate terrorism', pushing the JDP to take a step back, and thus the Kurdish Expansion project lost its support. The most important pledge of the Kurdish Expansion project had been for the drawing up of a new civilian constitution that made a new definition of citizenship and granted cultural rights to the Kurds. This remains as an unfulfilled project.

1.5. Conclusion

As Liu and Laszlo state, 'Collective memories of war are refreshed by new conflicts' (2006: 92). The traumatic memories of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire have been revived again and again over the years with every new casualty. The trauma has remained the same, but the enemy has changed and has brought new threats. While before the establishment of the Republic the enemy were the European forces and non-Muslim elements living in the Empire, after the collapse of the Empire in the 1930s the enemies were Islamists and Kurds. Throughout the 1970s the enemy were leftist terrorist groups. Both secularist and nationalist policies have attempted to define an 'ideal Turkish' citizen, and in doing so, have pushed significant portions of the population into a secondary status. 'Kurds, conservative Muslims and non-Muslims are the most prominent examples of the identities that the Turkish state has rendered as secondary' throughout the last three decades (Kaya, 2012: 150).

The conflict between the state and the PKK, and the various policies put in place within republican history, have polarised society in terms of ethnic identity, and radicalised both the Kurdish and Turkish populations. As stated by McDowall, 'No

Kurd could be unaware of what was happening' (2004: 426-7). While most of the Turkish population has been kept uninformed or misinformed by the state-led media, first-hand experiences of violence and discrimination over the last three decades have created a distinct form of self-awareness in the daily lives of Kurds. Besides the PKK-centred movement, the proliferation of the narratives of democratisation and human rights, and the opportunities provided by various communication channels have contributed to the political evolution of the Kurds (Barkey and Fuller, 1998: 5). Although there is little conflict between ordinary Kurds and Turks in daily life, even after thirty years of bitter war, the general picture that has been drawn in republican history is wholly summarised in one sentence by Barkey and Fuller:

> *"Kurds and Turks are coming to live in their own psychological worlds – working jointly in society but increasingly nourishing suspicions about each other's intentions and identifying with different things" (1998: 17).*

The strategy of denial has its roots in a much longer history of Kurdish identity, stretching throughout the twentieth century until the 1990s. While the Kurdish uprising made visible the Kurdish Question and the demands of the Kurdish movement, the issue is still denied in the narratives of both political elites and ordinary people. While perceptions of Kurds have been presented in dichotomies such as bad-good, patriotic-separatist and the terrorist-loyal citizen in the Turkish nationalist narratives, it is vital to acknowledge that personal encounters between Turks and Kurds often challenge these dichotomies. Denying the Kurds and the Kurdish Question, however, and defining the Kurds because of the existence of the Question seems a paradoxical aspect of the State narrative. This perspective also has its reflections in the personal perceptions of the Question and has also become more visible in the personal accounts of individuals.

This chapter has painted a general picture of the history of Turkish politics from the perspective of the Kurdish Question and Turkish nationalism. A rough summary has been provided of certain periods and significant events to highlight particular forms of nationalism and the conditions under which they emerged. To capture the multidimensional and ambivalent picture of nationalism, an attempt has been made

to explain the general structure of the current political atmosphere and the backdrop of encounters/interactions between Kurdish and Turkish people. This short historical account of Turkish nationalism and the recent political picture presents the various forms that were experienced in different periods. The goal of this research is to provide an insight into how people perceive collective memory, and how nationalist narratives are produced, how they become pervasive and to what end they serve. As mentioned above, it is essential to understand the content of the encounters and their importance in creating narratives about the 'self' and the 'other' in order to grasp nationalism in everyday life.

2. Conceptualising Nationalism

In the words of Benedict Anderson (1991), 'Nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our times (1991: 3), although it is becoming increasingly difficult to come up with a grand theory that explains every aspect of nationalism. As cultural, historical and political structures vary, it is not possible to establish a universal definition of nationalism that encompasses all of its possible meanings and aspects. Conversi (1995) claims that the reason for the lack of a universally accepted definition of nationalism stems from the fact that 'the nation is a means of definition' (Conversi, 1995: 77), meaning that it is not possible to conceptualise a notion of nationalism abstractly without a context.

According to Jaffrelot (2003), nationalism theories are usually divided into two broad categories.[26] The first of these regards nationalism as an 'ism', being a product of large social transformations based on the process of modernisation; while the second regards the nation as a continuation of pre-existing ethnic characteristics. Jaffrelot asserts that the distinction between modernist and perennialist perspectives has been made by scholars whose focus is on theories of ethnicity (2003: 42). This review indicates that scholars examining the macro theories of nationalism have tended to focus on the emergence and appearance of nation/alism in the modern era, the meaning of the nation, the relationship between the nation and nationalism, the tools that enable nationhood, and the main functions of nations and nationalism(s) within a social construction. Due to the macro phenomena that these theories follow are categorised as macro nationalism theories within this research.

As Bourdieu (1999) argues, "one cannot understand one's position in the macro social order without reference to the directly experienced effects of social interaction within different social microcosm" (cited in Mann and Fenton, 2009: 520).Macro approaches aim to grasp nationalism through such broad parameters as modernisation, capitalism, and industrialisation, power and so forth and overlook the micro forms of nationalism at the level of everyday life. From this perspective I

[26] See Kramer (1997) for another classification of the theories of nationalism.

suggest that nationalism is an endemic ideology embedded in the micro-formations of everyday life: in relationships between minorities and hegemonic groups, in affairs among children, men and women, in places of work, in schools, in the streets, and on our bodies. Accordingly, it is not possible to understand nationalism by looking only at the official ideological formations of state politics, at the level of institutions, etc. Theories that focus on the notion of ethnicity, such as perennialist and ethno-symbolist approaches, ignore and make invisible the distinctive features of nationhood and the ways of ethnic identification. That said, employing a micro and bottom-up perspective does not ignore the macro argumentations of nationalism, in that any research focusing on the daily appearances of the nationalism from a bottom-up perspective cannot provide a comprehensive evaluation of nationalism without visiting the macro argumentations.

From this perspective, this research aims to make visible the some 'daily', 'ordinary' and 'personal' appearances of nationalism through personal narratives. As stated above, while macro theories of nationalism are seen as the foundation, the micro appearances and the production and ways of practising nationalism are conceptualised. To produce a reasonable theoretical path:

i. The macro theories of nationalism, Gellner's and Hobsbawm's perspectives, see nationalism as a modern phenomenon, Breuilly's perspective on centring 'politics', Anderson's focuses on print media, are visited.
ii. Departing from the critiques of the macro theories of nationalism, some prominent concepts such as the concept of everyday nationhood and popular nationalism are discussed. In order to develop more extensive evaluation of the narratives of respondents, the concepts are; ethnicity, prejudice and discrimination are also included into this discussion.

2.1. 'Modernisation' as the Starting Point of Nationalism

According to the modernist perspective, as advanced by Kohn in his pioneering study *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History* (1965), the roots of nationalism date back no further than the eighteenth century. While approaches that see nationalism as a

product of modernisation share common grounds, they are composed of quite different perspectives, such as Gellner's (1964, 1983, 1997) economistic theories of modernisation, the social communication theories of Deutsch (1953) and Anderson (1983), the economistic theory of Nairn inspired by Marxism (1977), and the politico-ideological theories of Breuilly (1982), Giddens (1981) and Mann (1992), in which different historical perspectives on the concepts of nation and nationalism are developed. Puri (2004) asserts that the main questions discussed in modernist theories of nationalism are:

> *"How do nationalism(s) and national states anchor the institutions, socioeconomic networks, beliefs and practices of modernity, and in what ways are nationalisms and states perceived as the outcome of modernity and its ill effects?" (2004: 58)*

Gellner (1964), one of the most quoted of all modernist theorists, makes a strong claim that nationalism has its roots in the new industrial order. In the Gellnerian approach, nationalism may not be regarded as recognition of the self-ethnicity of nations, but rather that nationalism is the thing 'which invents nations where they do not exist' (Gellner, 1964: 168). Gellner's main contribution was in defining nationalism as a phenomenon that depends not only on state formation processes and the industrial society, but also on such cultural changes as population explosions, rapid urbanisation, labour migration, state-driven education, mobility and communication between individuals. For Gellner, '… a high culture pervades the whole of society, defines it and needs to be sustained by that polity' (1983: 18). He goes on to assert that nationalism is quite far from being natural or universal.

> *"Men do not become nationalists from sentiment or sentimentality, atavistic or not, well-based or myth-founded: they become nationalists through genuine, objective, practical necessity, however obscurely recognized"(Gellner, 1964: 160).*

Hobsbawm's (1990) theory of nationalism regards nationalism as a modern phenomenon. Hobsbawm emphasises the role of nationalism in the creation of industrial economies and the transition from local to national economic systems (1990; 27-29). Within this instrumentalist perspective, Hobsbawm's and Gellner's

assumptions regard nationalism as a product of nationalist elites that contribute to the building of nation states.

While some nationalist movements can be explained in reference to modernisation and the political, economic and social transformations that are the outcome of the modernisation process, these factors cannot be construed as constituting a general explanation of nationalism (Breuilly, 1994:1). Breuilly states that by focusing on identity, modernisation or class, intellectuals overlook the basic motive of nationalism: power. As he puts it, '… nationalism refers to the political movements seeking or exercising power and justifying such action with nationalist arguments' (1994:2).

Another aspect of nationalism related to creation of nationhood and the dissemination of nationalism is discussed in Anderson's, *Imagined Communities* (1991), in which it is stated that the convergence of capitalism and print media enabled 'rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and relate themselves with others, in profoundly new ways' (1991: 90). This transformation triggered the creation of imagined communities, in which members of the nation would never know all their fellow members.

At this point it needs to be underlined that there are different perspectives on the processes and means of nation-building and the notion of nationalism. Pakkasvirta claims that while Anderson's work describes perfectly the preconditions likely to make possible a sense of national belonging, it may not give a clear explanation of the nature of nationalism (2013: 86). In Jaffrellot's classification of nationalism theories, Gellner and Anderson can be classified under the 'nation-building school' (2003: 2). Both Anderson's and Gellner's theories are concerned with nation-making and nationhood rather than nationalism per se. In the light of these critiques, it can be concluded that macro nationalism theories aim to bring answers to the questions of how nations are built, while clarifying what the effects of modernisation processes are, from a macro socio-economic perspective.

The question of when the nation came into being has a prominent role in the contemporary theoretical debate on nationalism, as highlighted by Ozkırımlı (2010: 199). In contrast to modernist theories of nationalism, the primordialist approach considers ethnic communities to be a central part of human history, and 'regards ethnicity as a given, a prior, constraining, and overriding social bond' (Smith, 2001: 84). Smith adds that although nationalism is a modern phenomenon, nations have existed throughout history, broadly rejecting arguments that 'nations are inventions of modern times' and the argument that nationalism is 'a construct of elites'. Critiquing Gellner's approach, Smith claims that modernism tells only half the story, nations and nationalism came to exist in the modern world, but overlooks what those nations will be, where they will emerge or why so many people are prepared to die for them (Smith, 2003: 195). In this regard, Smith proposes an approach that explores not only the processes and requirements of modernity, but also the genealogies of nations. This method points to the ethnic bonds that are regarded to have existed before the emergence of nationalism, and have been employed by the elites in the course of the production of myths and symbols, and articulated in memories, values and traditions. In primordialist-perennialist approaches, the continuities between modern nations and their pre-modern predecessors are stressed. However as Gellner stated in Warwick Debates, even there are the cultural and symbolic continuities between the ethnies and modern nations "…the cultural continuity is contingent and inessential" (2008: 370). While the continuity of the *ethnies* within modern nation-state formations is proved, in this perspective far from provides comprehensive answers to the questions of 'what is nationalism?' and 'how is it practiced and reproduced through the ordinary members of a nation?'

2.1.1. From Critiques of Elite-Based Perspectives of Nationalism to an Everyday Perspective of Nationalism

As discussed above, the macro-approaches to nationalism, and the questions they ask do not fit the points that are sought out in this study. Such research, in which the focus is on the 'daily', 'ordinary' and 'personal' aspect of nationalism and based on

the personal narratives of individuals, necessitates a 'bottom-up' perspective, as Hobsbawm (1990) suggests. His criticism of Gellner's theory is the most important theoretical point of departure in this research, specifically, that Gellner's account does not pay adequate attention to the view from below, and he asserts that 'official ideologies of states and movements are not reliable guides as to what ordinary people, even the most loyal citizens think' (1990: 10-11). From this perspective, Hobsbawm states:

> *"While [nationalism]… is constructed essentially from above, [it] … cannot be understood unless also analyzed from below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist" (1990: 10).*

This research follows Hobsbawm's suggested 'from below' perspective, taking this as the starting point so as to deepen the discussion and situate the study within the nationalism literature.

In this respect, it is necessary to look at the basic critiques of modernist approaches, but before moving on to these, it is necessary to state that examining nationalism from a quotidian, bottom-up perspective does not mean ignoring the general political discussions and transformations that occur in the macro political sphere. Indeed these two perspectives should be regarded rather as two sides of the same coin. That said the various ways in which ethnicity and nationalism are practiced and experienced in everyday life are not simple reflections of macro political transformations. As an ideology that is embedded in all aspects of society, nationalism cannot be fully understood from just one aspect.

One of the aspects of modernist approaches that is often criticised is its elite-based evaluation of the processes involved in the 'emergence of nation states and the ideology of nationalism', and the forms of reproduction of nationalism. This critique is prominent in terms of its ability to make visible the ignorance of 'ordinary', 'everyday' and 'personal' aspects of nationalism within literature. Though not all theorists emphasise equally the role of the elites, modernist perspectives tend to

differ in their opinion of the ways in which the elites are instrumental in mobilising nationalism and consolidating the power of the nation state (Puri, 2004: 58). Such critiques of the elite-based perspective of modernist theories of nationalism make a special contribution in seeking to understand the 'quotidian' and 'ordinary people' of nationalism. As Deloye states, if we are seeking to understand nationalism from the aspect of everyday life, it is inappropriate to focus only on the political nation-builders, such as the education system, the military, the state or the actions of nationalist intellectuals (2013: 615).

Anderson also criticises elite-based perspectives, and refers to the 'quotidian' as an appropriate field through which one can see the experience of the nation (1983: 36). The main concern of these critiques is their lack of interest in and understanding of the links between nationalism and encounters between ordinary people in everyday life. Though the power of political institutions are overstated within literature, the question of how nationalism is rooted in the unequal relations between the self and other is ignored.

Departing from these critiques raises the question: 'If we shift emphasis away from the role of the elites, how is it possible to explain the production and reproduction of different forms of nationalism(s) within a nation-state?'[27] This question makes it necessary to trace the ways in which nationhood is practiced, the types of narratives that they articulate and the reproduction of ethnic identification in everyday life.

[27] At this point, stressing the definition of such ambiguous concepts as state, nation, nation state and nationalism within the context of multi-ethnic states such as Turkey is important. However the focus of this research is not the political meanings of these conceptions, although the multi-ethnic structures of the recent nation-states emerge as a prominent issue. Connor states that while defining the concept of state in a political manner as '… the subdivision of the globe' is relatively easy, the concept of nation refers to an ambiguous meaning frame (Connor, 1978:379-380). When the concept of nation is defined in a non-political sense, the question of 'How does one differentiate the nation from other human collectives?' such as religious groups, clans etc. is raised (1978:380). From this perspective in a multi-ethnic state, notions of 'nation' and the political manner of the 'nation state' become a challenging issue. It is not possible to claim a nation state that is composed of ethnically and racially homogenous inhabitants. The multi-ethnic structure of recent nation states is not exceptional. Within the related literature, cases of Kurds in Turkey, Flems in Belgium, Welsh and Scots in the United Kingdom and so forth is discussed in the conception of multi-ethnic states and the definitions of the concepts of nation, ethnicity, state and nation-state become salient.

2.2. Nationalism in Everyday Life

With these contributions, the theoretical debate on nationalism was seen to have reached a new stage at the end of the 1980s, although in order to understand the emergence and proliferation of studies of ethnicity and nationalism, it is necessary to consider developments in cultural theory. Eley and Suny (1996) listed four contributions that cultural studies have provided to our understanding of nation, ethnicity and nationalism. The first of these is the cultural studies perspective, which locates culture at the centre of nation-forming without connecting it to a primordial meaning (1996: 21). The second refers to the anthropological perspective of cultural studies, which makes possible a quotidian perspective of nationalism, in which culture is defined as an informal, practical and unconscious territory of everydayness in one anthropological sense (1996: 21). Placing culture at the centre of the analytical framework highlights the dynamics in the production of ethnicity that 'arises in the interaction between groups' (1996: 21). The third contribution that cultural studies made to nationalism studies concerns Habermas' concept of the 'public sphere'. Furthermore, Eley and Suny highlight the centrality of cultural publics in nation the building processes (1996: 23), which draws attention to everyday encounters neighbourhoods, streets, workplaces, schools, etc., which are of crucial importance to this research. The fourth contribution is the set of questions that constitute the key themes in cultural studies: 'How is the nation *represented*? How are its aspirations *authorized*? And how are its origins and claims *narrated*?' (1996: 24). This body of work makes it possible to analysis the products of popular culture, such as film, photography, television and video, rather than national literature (1996: 24).

Ozkirimli states that the departure point of the new approaches questions the fundamental assumptions of nationalism literature and 'takes a step by highlighting the ignored issues of their predecessors' (2010: 169). Bhabha (1990) points out that the nation is often read from a functionalist perspective, and is regarded as the ideological means of state power in nationalism literature. For Bhabha, the other form that nation and nationalism takes is the 'national-popular' sentiment conversed in radical memory. Although he underlines the significance of these approaches, he

also points to another means by which 'alternative constituencies of peoples and oppositional analytic capacities may emerge', being through the everyday new 'ethnicities' and so forth (1990:3).

Skey (2011) and Klein, (2001) assert that 'everyday life' stands as an ignored parameter within nationalism literature; however the problem with 'everyday life' is that, as David Chaney has observed, it is taken for granted by scholars, despite the fact that it is 'generally the bedrock of social reality' (2002: 4). Jenkins also underlines that:

> *"If we wish to understand how the macro patterns that are to be found in large-scale quantitative data are produced and reproduced, how they are made and changed, there is no substitute for exploring in detail the lives of real people, from whose real behaviour those data are abstraction" (2011: 15).*

It is necessary to understand how and why identities are lived and made meaningful by concentrating of the flow of everyday life, ordinary practices, and the perceptions and roles of ordinary people in the process of the reproduction of nationalism (Skey, 2009: 334). Cohen asserts that 'the individual is highly specific, and is distinguished from other individuals in innumerable and very particular ways' (1996: 802). Therefore it is required to understand how individuals perceive themselves and how they perceive their nations, and to differentiate between the official representations of the regimes and perceptions of individuals (Cohen, 1996: 803). This transformative and dynamic process of reproduction of nationalism at the everyday level and the related official ideology of nationalism makes discussions of the personal experiences and dynamic perceptions and practices of ordinary people a matter of great interest. This way of thinking is reminiscent of Anthony Cohen's conception of 'personal nationalism'. In his words:

> *"We watch these rites and, as individuals, in interpreting them we remake them in the sense that we are able to make of them. In just the same way, we listen to our leaders' vacuous rhetoric and render it meaningful by attributing our own sense to it, so that the sense we hear in the words being uttered is ours, not theirs. We hear their*

> *voices but listen to ourselves. This is what I mean by 'personal nationalism" (Cohen, 1996: 807).*

To Harrison, everyday life is always open to 'new possibilities' (2000: 498), and this feature of everyday life means that it is always 'open ended, fluid and generative', being more related to 'becoming' than to 'being'. Accordingly, we sensually experience and understand what is 'constantly attaching, weaving and disconnecting; constantly mutating and creating' (quoted in Edensor, 2002:23). In this respect, in the fluid structure of everyday life the notions of nation, national identity and nationalism(s) should also be regarded as dynamic structures. By this definition, people cannot be defined only as consumers of national meaning, in that they are 'simultaneously their contingent producers' (Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008: 546).

There is now a broad body of research with a focus on everyday nationalism, from fields as diverse as social psychology, social anthropology, social linguistics, sociology, politics, media studies, education and cultural studies. However, these studies focus on different aspects of the concept of nationalism and use different theoretical and methodological tools, with a common focus being on how the nation/national identity is constructed in social life.

It is possible to categorise research on everyday nationalism into two streams: the first concentrates on institutions such as media, education and the state that produce and disseminate national(ist), messages and tend to comprehend how the nation is produced through these mechanisms. Examples of this approach include Edensor's (2002) *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, Miller-Idriss' (2004) research on citizenship, Fox and Miller-Idriss' (2008) work on everyday nationhood, and Palmer's (1998) study on experiencing the nation in the context of food, body and landscape. These studies look for common symbols (emblems, icons, images, flags and monuments), special national days, media texts and news to make sense of the narrative of the nation, the national and nationalism. Although these works aim to show how people perceive these messages and how they produce and reproduce nationalism through everyday practices, they do not situate 'personal production/perception' at the centre of the research. The second kind of research on

everyday nationalism is based on people's experiences, narratives about their perceptions, personal practices and forms of interactions. Cohen's (1996) concept of 'personal nationalism', Jean-Klein's (2001) study of nationalism and resistance in everyday life in Palestine, and Brubaker *et al.*'s (2004) study of everyday ethnicity in Cluj are examples of this kind of research. Similar to the first kind of research, they investigate national symbols, special national events and media texts through the narratives of people, and aim to follow the traces of these symbols through the perceptions and experiences of ordinary people. Their focus is on the strategies that produce national identities and everyday practices that make people members of the nation.

2.2.1. Ethnicity in Everyday Life

The discussion above serves as a path for studying the ways in which ethnicity, race and nationalism are produced and performed at the level of identity and everyday life. Nationalism as a meta-narrative plays a key role in the means of ethnic identification of individuals in society. Within the borders constructed by the meta-narrative of nationalism, ethnic identities are produced and reproduced at a personal level. Ethnicity becomes a concept that needs to be explained "within the social and personal context in which ethnic identities and sentiments are created and enacted" (Mann and Fenton, 2009: 517). In Benton's view, while the concept of race leads to a negative categorisation of society, ethnicity refers generally to a positive group identification. As Benton states, "ethnicity is generally more concerned with the identification of 'us', while racism is more oriented to the categorization of 'them'" (Benton, 1983: 106, cited in Eriksen, 2010: 6-7). The term "ethnicity" "refers to relationships between groups whose members consider themselves distinctive and these groups are often ranked hierarchically within a society" (Eriksen, 2010: 10).

In order to understand the dynamic means of production and reproduction of Turkish and Kurdish identities, which are based mostly on macro political moments and micro personal encounters, it is necessary to consider Barth's work on the processes

involved in developing and maintaining ethnic boundaries (1969; 21-22). Barth defines ethnicity as a 'social organization of cultural difference' and points at the necessity of focusing on the process that makes possible the reproduction of ethnic groups (1969: 10). He asserts that ethnic distinctions are not based on a lack of social interaction, but that interaction is the foundation of the social system that makes it possible to identify the group (1969: 10). Within this conceptualization 'ethnicity is constituted by identification on the basis of membership of collectives that are differentiated from each other by shared "ways of life" or "culture" (Jenkins, 2011: 3).

Barth's theory provides the conceptual tools with which to think about the interaction between ethnic groups and the means of ethnic identification, while also facilitating an understanding of the ways in which individuals narrate nationalism. Conceptions of the dynamic forms of interaction and the boundaries that are defined and redefined by individuals make it possible to see 'ethnicity' as a cultural form that is produced in everyday life.

Brubaker suggests that ethnicity should be conceptualised in 'relational, processual, dynamic, eventful and disaggregated terms' rather than as a substance and entity (2002:167). The influential 2006 *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* by Brubaker *et al*. present an alternative to the substantialist understanding of ethnic groups and nations, as bounded entities, collective individuals and self-conscious actors. They argue that these are not social idioms of individual choice, but rather a relational, processual and dynamic understanding of ethnicity and nation. To advance this argument they focus on identifications, languages, networks and interactions, without assuming that each everyday experience is organised pervasively by strong ethnic identities.

In applying their theoretical approach, Brubaker *et al.* (2006) focus on such particular categories as occupation, ethnicity, religion, language, institutions (schools, churches, workplaces, media) and patterns of migration, and evaluate all of these categories through the concept of asymmetry. They assume that there is an

asymmetry in social forms and means of interaction that must be considered in any assessment of nationalism, and their sample included a broad range of people, such as university students, teenagers, retired teachers, firemen, housewives, women and men with varying degrees of education, and so on. It should be noted that this approach does not take into account institutional discourses and the extent to which they may affect the parameters of the social environment. As Skey asserts, Brubaker *et al.* 'make us acutely aware of the manifold ways in which different groups are addressed (or ignored) and respond to, challenge or ignore such discourses' (2009: 342).

From this perspective, Brubaker *et al.* (2006) underline the necessity of developing 'an analytical vocabulary for talking about *ethnicity without talking about ethnic groups*' *(emphasis mine)* (2006: 8), and their concern is how ethnicity works within everyday experience rather than to what extent ethnicity matters are discussed (2006: 364). They see ethnicity as a 'modality of experience' and an intermittent phenomenon for ordinary people (2006: 207-8), and from this perspective, ethnicity is not regarded as a thing or a substance, but rather 'an interpretive prism, a way of making sense of the social world' (2006: 7), and it is always only one among of many such interpretive frames. Ethnicity emerges in the course of interethnic encounters among neighbours, friends, etc. (2006: 362) in the context of everyday life, which means that we must think of ethnicity, race and the nation in terms of 'practical categories, common-sense knowledge, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, mental maps, interactional cues, discursive frames, organisational routines, social networks and institutional forms' (2002: 167).

Brubaker *et al.* (2006) aim to uncover the everyday practices of nationalism, and the various ways nationalism appears in the context of everyday life. They do this by examining everyday embodiments and expressions as a way of addressing the basic questions related to ethnicity: where it is, when it matters and how it works. In their words:

> *"Ethnicity, race and nationhood include ethnicized ways of seeing (and ignoring), of construing (and misconstruing), of inferring (and*

> *misinferring), of remembering (and forgetting). These include ethnically oriented frames, schemas and narratives and the situational cues that activate them ... They include systems of classification, categorization and identification, formal and informal. And they include the tacit, taken-for-granted background knowledge, embodied in persons and embedded in institutionalized routines and practices, through which people recognize and experience objects, places, persons, actions or situations as ethnically, racially or nationally marked and meaningful" (Brubaker, et al., 2006: 174-175).*

By focusing on the asymmetries among different ethnic groups that become visible in the course of daily encounters, Brubaker offers an appropriate tool for the present research, which focuses on the narratives of ethnic minority and majority group members. As he underlines, research examining the different ethnic practices of individuals from different ethnicities must not assume the existence of only one type of nationalism in one ethnic group. Furthermore, the ways ordinary people think about and practice their ethnic identities cannot be regarded simply as an outcome of a common strong ethnic identity that is taken for granted in society. The importance of ethnicity depends on the types of encounters that people experience in everyday life, and so these approaches facilitate an understanding of the ruptures and clashes that appear as a result of the ethnic practices of individuals within everyday life.

2.2.2. Nation and Nationhood in Everyday Life

Fox and Miller Idriss (2008) aimed to 'shed light on some of the ways in which ordinary people are active participants in the quotidian productions and reproductions of the nation' (2008: 538). To this end, they developed a means of examining the actual practices of ordinary people in which they produce and reproduce the nation and nationalism. From this perspective, neither the concepts of nationalism and nationhood nor the people are passive actors. When people practice the nation, they give shape to their understanding, and they are also practiced and reshaped by these concepts (2008: 538-9). Drawing on Hobsbawm (1990), Fox and Miller Idriss (2008) underline the necessity of studying nationalism from below. For them, 'Nation … is not simply the product of macro-structural forces; it is

simultaneously the practical accomplishment of ordinary people engaging in routine activities' (2008: 537).

Their approach to analysing 'everyday nationhood' looks at the four ways in which nationalism and nationhood are produced and reproduced. The first is 'talking the nation', which refers to talking practices on nationhood and nationalism. Talking in terms of 'us' and 'them', and referring to nationhood in everyday discussions is an active practice that allows people to define nationhood and reproduce themselves within these discourses. The second is termed 'choosing the nation', and refers to the ways in which nationhood frames the choices people make. The third, 'performing the nation', concerns the meanings and references given to the nation through the use of the national symbols; and finally, the fourth is termed 'consuming the nation', and captures the differences between nations in the mundane tastes and preferences of ordinary people (2008: 537-8).

Of these four practices 'talking the nation' is the most instructive concept for this research. It is not that the other three practices are less important in understanding everyday nationhood, however 'talking about the nation' and 'talking with the nation' fits most closely into the subject of this research, being the narratives of nationhood and nationalism articulated by ordinary people.

2.2.2.1. Talking about the Nation' and 'Talking with the Nation'

According to the concept of 'everyday nationhood', the discussions that ordinary people engage in about nationhood and nationalism constitutes a way of practicing nationhood. Fox and Miller Idriss (2008) distinguish between 'talking in nation' and 'talking about nation'. As with other scholars of everyday nationalism and nationhood, they do not see ordinary people as the passive recipients of a stylised discourse developed by the elites. Rather, they see ordinary people as active agents, particularly in the practice of talking about nation. As they state, 'nation is not something ordinary people talk about; rather, it's something they talk with' (2008: 540). Here 'nation is not the object of talk but rather an unselfconscious disposition

about the national order of things that intermittently informs talk' (2008: 540). They argue that the content of the taken-for-granted understanding of the nation is discursively shaped by ordinary people through the practice of 'talking about the nation' (2008: 539). In addition to an interactional process which makes possible the production of ordinary people and the concept of 'nationhood', 'talking with nation' refers to another form of reconstruction that emerges through the talk of ordinary people. Fox and Miller Idriss state that 'nation is not only a topic of talk, but also a culturally available schema that can be discursively deployed to make sense of other topics of talk, explain predicaments and order social difference' (2008: 540). In other words, as people talk about such quotidian topics as jobs, workplaces, daily encounters, media texts and relationships, their speech is framed by their sense of ethnicity.

The approach developed by Fox and Miller Idriss contributes to and supports the theoretical stance of this research in terms of the active role of ordinary people and the importance of 'talking in and about nationhood' as a reproductive process. This research, which centres on the personal narratives of ethnicity and nationalism articulated by ordinary people, also regards talking as a re-framing practice for both people themselves and the concepts they talk about.

While the concept of 'everyday nationhood' provides a useful means of examining the practice of ethnicity in everyday life, the prominent role Fox and Miller Idriss assign to ethnicity/nationhood within the identification process seems exaggerated. Besides ethnic forms of identification, non-ethnic forms of identification should also be taken into account in research design, as highlighted by Dawson (2012). Dawson's research is based on Fox and Miller Idriss' conception of 'everyday nationhood', and aims to provide a methodological toolkit for the study of ethnicity and nationhood. His study was conducted in a multi-ethnic town called Kircaali/Kurdzhali in Southern Bulgaria, where the Bulgarian majority live alongside a Turkish minority. He states that while the approach of 'everyday nationhood' does not concern directly non-ethnic forms of identification, in his research a rural-urban divide was an important finding (2012: 473-474). As such, 'non-ethnic forms of

identification could have been predicted and built into the research design' (2012: 474). He criticises the approach of 'everyday nationhood', due to the limiting perspective it provides on other forms of identification, and offers the alternative approach of 'everyday identification', which includes non-ethnic forms of identification. His argument that other forms of identification are always available and must be analysed alongside ethnic-identification is relevant to the present research, which focuses on the modes of reproduction of national identification at the level of everyday life.

Jenkins' (2011) approach to the ways in which ordinary people practice national identity is also helpful in understanding the specific case of Kurds and Turks in Turkey. He proposes two types of identification: 'nominal' and 'virtual'. Nominal identification refers to being Danish in the context of his research; while virtual identification implies 'the experience of being identified, by the self and others, as Danish' (2011: 5). He also states that while the nominal classification refers to a historical notion, virtual classification is a matter of diversity: 'Nominal identification may endure over time, but the virtualities of identification change' (2011: 5). In his words, 'identification builds a bridge between individuality and collectivity, giving every one of us a name and a place in which to stand on each side of that divide' (2011: 17). The link he constructs between the narrative and experience also sheds light on the theoretical framework of this study, in that he defines everyday nationalism as the local narratives and perspectives that people employ to make sense of complicated and changing experiences (2011: 17).

2.3. Conclusion

The importance of the everyday perspective in nationalism studies for this research has been touched upon throughout the chapter. Personal experiences and encounters occur within the routines of everyday life, and the narratives based on these encounters are regarded as a primary way in which ethnicity and nationalism are practiced. Research that questions how ordinary people narrate ethnicity and nationalism may be situated within an everyday perspective, and may be legitimised by the argument that ordinary people are active agents.

Regarding ethnicity as a dynamic and unstable process of production based on context, the concept of 'everyday nationhood' makes it possible to look at personal narratives as a means of ethnic identification. 'Everyday nationhood' alerts us to the importance of examining ways of talking about nation and talking with nation, the choices people make within their sense of nationhood, and the ways nationhood is consumed within the routines of everyday life. Brubaker *et al.*'s research in Cluj is an excellent example of an empirical study that questions the practices of ordinary people from different ethnicities. Although the present research does not replicate the aforementioned studies, it does follow some of their methodological patterns and, moreover, employs certain theoretical concepts that they developed in its research design. The rich heritage of literature on nationalism provides sufficient perspectives to disentangle the meanings and modes of production of nationalism, to question the ways in which the ethnic 'us' and 'other' are practiced and to examine the extent to which the practices of ethnicity cohere with meta-narratives. That said, the role of personal narratives remains an aspect that requires further investigation, and this is the specific gap that this research aims to address.

3. Theoretical Discussion on Narrative

"Narrative…begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative" (Roland Barthes, 1997: 79).

Politics is not only practiced by politicians in Parliament and the elite in state institutions, as its effects are not only felt, but also influenced in both the public and private spheres. Everyday life is a distinct space in which politics is produced and reproduced. As Negt and Kluge (1988) state, "the private is political". The personal lives and experiences of individuals are not separate from politics. "The political (…) is hidden in the everyday, exactly where it is most obvious: in the contradictions of lived experience, in the most banal and repetitive gestures of everyday life" (Fogg, 2009: xiv). While regarding everyday life as a fluid and dynamic praxis that is open to various potentialities (Edensor, 2002:3), it is possible to focus on politics as a scene in which various encounters are made within the frame of ethnicity and national identity. As Ozkirimli states, "national identity is produced, reproduced and contested in the taken-for-granted details of social interaction, the habits and routines of everyday life" (2005: 191). Taking this perspective as a starting point, this research presents the narratives of individuals related to the ethnicity and ethnic identities that are produced in the flow of everyday life.

This research is inspired both by the personal stories related to ethnic identity that I heard throughout the course of the study, and by my own personal experiences as a Turkish person with a relationships with the Kurds, who are often considered the "other" of Turkish nationalism. I recognized the power of personal accounts in the ways that people formulated self-political identities through their accounts. As Bakhtin states narratives are one powerful means of communicating models of identity, through the "voices" assigned to characters and through narrators' positioning with respect to these voices (cited in Wortham, Lee, & Mortimer, 2011; 57). Antagonists in both the Kurdish and Turkish camps produce political narratives and counter narratives, while among the ordinary people; personal encounters

provide a crucial source of information for reflection and discussions of politics. I have observed that people with no interest in politics tend to speak about the issue of ethnicity when they have personal experiences with ethnic "others". They do not employ a political language when describing such encounters, nor do they conceptualize their ideas or experiences using such political terms as "nationalism", "prejudice" or "discrimination". Rather, they adopt another political language to relate their personal experiences with the "other". For them, some encounters, such those with Kurdish/Turkish neighbors, or an annoying encounter with a Kurdish salesman in the bazaar, or the exclusionary attitudes of a friend in the workplace, or an emotional memory of a Kurdish laborer who worked for them in their hazelnut grove are not regarded as politics, but as personal/anecdotal. That said, I believe that these kinds of "daily" encounters *are* political, and through these simple daily encounters and the way in which they are explained, people become political actors.

"Turkish nationalism" is a common narrative among the elites, political parties, army, constitutions, media and historiography, and is reproduced through people's collective and personal stories. Counter-nationalist narratives, on the other hand, tend to concentrate on the alternative aspects of the story in an effort to produce another narrative. Following the approach of Molly Andrews (2007) in her book *Shaping History: Narratives of Political Change*, I employ the term "political" with a small "p", as this captures my interest in terms of the relationships between people's lives and the social and political frameworks in which they are active. As Andrews points out, it is important to find out "how people view the struggles in which they have participated", and also to see "how they locate themselves in a wider political process" (2007: 2). Politics in everyday life is practiced in a variety of ways and with different motives. The daily encounters and narratives of personal experiences in this study are articulated through narratives of individuals, and in this way, challenging the exposed political meta-narratives and diverse means of identification among individuals becomes possible.

Studies that are based on macro perspectives tend to shed light on the collective identities of ethnicity, sense of belonging and nationalism; while a study of personal narratives would have great potential to reveal the forms of interaction, identity

positioning and social conceptions of individuals. As Ricoeur (2004) states, narratives serve as "a lens or window through which we can best study social life", and by following this approach, this thesis examines the personal accounts and stories of individuals to present different forms of interaction in everyday life. In doing so, it aims to provide an understanding of the nationalist beliefs, perceptions and practices of the individuals, based on the various forms of social encounters in which they are engaged. As Yuval-Davis (2006) states, "Identities are narratives, stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not)" (2006: 202). From this departure point, it is claimed in this study that in nationalism studies, following a perspective that focuses on the personal stories and everyday experiences of individuals may provide a good understanding of how ordinary people see ethnic conflict and the ways they posit the "self" and "others" in their narratives.

This chapter discusses the ways in which narratives may be defined, how macro social and political issues may be discussed through narrative inquiry, and the relationship between personal narratives, the production of self-political identities and the relationship between personal narratives, along with the potential for resistance.

3.1. Discussions on the Concept of the Narrative

The existence of one argument stating that the "narrative is dead" and another asserting that "everything is narrative"[28] is evidence of the chasm between different positions in debates on narrative, and also the breadth of narrative literature. The most common feature of these debates is the acceptance of a "narrative turn" in social sciences, which has resulted over the last two decades in the development of corresponding literature on narrative analysis. Rather than attempting to summarise this vast body of literature, I will attempt instead to understand and conceptualise the term "narrative" based on the arguments outlined in this thesis.

[28] See R. H. Brown (1980) for a discussion on the death of the traditional narrative; and see K. Plummer (2005) for a discussion on "everything is narrative".)

Hayden White points out that the word "narrate" comes from the Sanskrit word "gna", meaning "to know", and this etymology points to the fact that narratives enable us to translate knowing into telling (White, 1981:1). The relationship between knowing and narrating, and the functions of narratives in the comprehension of the world, are crucial subjects in this vast body of literature. As Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) state, a "narrative somehow mediates between self and world, either evoking or simply creating order and meaning" (1997: xvi).

Literature frequently points to the difficulty of categorizing the definitions and applications of narrative research in different fields. Distinctions can be drawn between content/context-centered approaches, small/big stories, individually/socially oriented narratives, thematic/structural narratives, performative/visual narratives, first order/second order narratives, ontological/representational narratives, and so forth. All of these classifications are derived from such questions as: What is narrative? How should we study it? And why is it important as a material, method or route to understanding psychological and/or social phenomena? Different research areas come up with different answers to these questions, epistemological approaches and theoretical perspectives, and different methodologies are suggested for dealing with each particular conception. Stanley and Temple (2008) assert that the meaning of narratives and approaches to them are still based on a few shared core concerns (2008: 267), and as such, narrative is neither disciplinary nor interdisciplinary. Stanley (2010) summarizes the main approaches to narratives that can be found in literature:

> *"First, [narrative] is sometimes so taken for granted that it is not explicitly spelled out or defined…Second, narrative is often defined in terms of what story is ... and a third approach sees narrative in terms of inquiry or analysis, as what the researcher does, methodologically and analytically – thus Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 4) describe their approach as 'under the heading of narrative inquiry with a rough sense of narrative as both phenomena under study and method of study', while Riessman (1993: 1) proposes that 'Narrative analysis*

takes as its object of investigation the story itself…" (Stanley, 2010:1).[29]

Polkinghorne (2005) suggests classifying narrative studies based on Jerome Bruner's (1985) conception of paradigmatic and narrative reasoning, while focusing specifically on narratives as a story and the use of stories in qualitative research. Bruner underlines the two modes of cognitive functioning – the two modes of thought that each suggest a distinctive ordering of experience and the construction of a reality that cannot be reduced to one another (1985: 97). Polkinghorne (2005) departs from this configuration of narratives as knowing, offering instead an interpretation of narrative inquiry. He suggests that there are two different ways of analysing narrative inquiry, both of which are concerned with stories, yet differ greatly in their mode of operation. In the first group, *analysis of narrative*, researchers collect stories as data and analyse them through paradigmatic processes. Through paradigmatic cognition, humans classify a specific instance as belonging to a category or concept, and thus constitute their experience as ordered (2005: 76). Paradigmatic reasoning "produces cognitive networks of concepts that allow people to construct experiences as familiar by emphasizing the common elements that appear over and over" (*2005*: 78). In the second type of narrative inquiry, *narrative analysis*, researchers collect descriptions of events and happenings, and synthesise or configure them by means of a plot into a story. In this way, an "analysis of narratives moves from stories to common elements, and narrative analysis moves from elements to stories" (*2005*: 80).

Polkinghorne's conceptualisation suggests two different ways of working with narratives: (1) using narratives to understand wider social issues as data, and (2) producing and revealing narratives through the diverse elements of a particular subject. According to Polkinghorne's classification, this research belongs to the first group of narrative inquiry, in which personal narratives are employed as data for the understanding of a wider social and political concept. While Polkinghorne does not

29 For different classifications of work on narrative, see: Brockheimer and Carbough (2001), De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2008), Lieblich et al. (1998). See Polkinghorne (2005) for another classification of narratives based on the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure (1966), Ludwig Wittgenstein (1968) and Roman Jakobson (1960).

categorise the two different ways a narrative may be employed in terms of the scale of the research, his work still provokes Liz Stanley's observation that there is an "…unacknowledged associated assumption that narrative inquiry = small-scale qualitative research" (2008: 435). Stanley goes on:

> *"Narrative inquiry provides a methodology, a set of broad procedural ideas and concepts, rather than a pre-set method or specified technique, and it encourages responsiveness to the dynamics of the research context" (2008: 436).*
>
> *"...it is a type of inquiry, an analytical process in which researchers engage, rather than being a kind of data" (Stanley, 2010:1).*

Stanley suggests that narrative inquiry creates a meta-narrative as a result of the interpretational overview of the researcher, based on small-scale stories (2008: 436). She states that "methodological problematics are masked by the keep it small, work on just one case approach that many narrative inquiries are designed around" (2008: 436). Her definition of "narrative inquiry" refers to similar types of narrative works according to Polkinghorne's "narrative analysis" conception, which aims to move "from elements to stories". Using narratives as data and using other elements to create a meta-narrative emerges as a factor in distinguishing narrative works.

Placing this research within Stanley's framed conceptualisation of narrative inquiry reveals two factors: (1) employing small-personal stories in order to (2) understand the meta-narrative of a large-scale social issue. As stated previously, the primary empirical data on which this research is based includes the personal narratives of individuals and observations of the interactions between two groups made during the fieldwork. Complex genres of narratives, such as visuals and narratives created by the media were not taken into account. This does not mean that meta-narrative forms, such as media narratives, official political narratives, visual narratives and narratives of the bodily practices of individuals, are ignored, but rather as Charles Tilly asserts, "…narratives do entail not only claim to reasonably reliable knowledge of actors, motives, ideas, actions and consequences but also postulation of actors and imputation of cause and effect within the narrative sequence" (2002: 17). In this

sense, the aim is to discuss a large social and political notion from the perspective of small-scale individual narratives.

3.2. Stories and Political Narrative

A study of stories in an attempt to understand social notions and social change cannot be carried out without referencing Charles Tilly's contribution to this area. While his early writings were based mainly on a comparative historical approach, in later years his "preference was studies based on a relational epistemology" (Stanley, 2009: 2). In the introduction to his book *Stories, Identities and Political Change*, he highlights the need to rediscover the importance of social transactions, ties and relations to social processes in order to examine the connections between social relations (2002: 5). He explains:

> *"To the extent that politics actually consists not of big structures and prescribed roles but of dynamic, contingent interaction among persons, households, and small groups, political ethnography provides privileged access to its processes, causes and effects. It makes little difference in this regard whether we take politics in the extremely broad sense of all interactions involving the exercise of power or in the narrower, more manageable sense, I prefer: interactions in which at least one government participates as actor, object, and/or influential third party. In either the broad or narrow sense, political ethnography brings field workers into direct contact with political processes instead of filtering that knowledge through other people's testimony, written records, and artefacts of political interaction" (2007: 248).*

In the preface to *Stories, Identities and Political Change (2002)*, Tilly emphasizes the importance of stories in social research, noting that "Analysts must learn enough about the production of stories to construct both what happened and how the prevailing accounts came to prevail" (2002: xi). While remaining skeptical about stories of social analysts, he states that stories offer the opportunity "to build systematic explanations of storytelling into more general accounts of social process" (2002: x). His emphasis on "superior stories", based on the Marxist-populist drive to construct "a history from below", aims to "introduce the vivified voices of ordinary and oppressed people into accounts of political process" (2002: 5). This research

follows this aspect, with two points made by Tilly in particular being essential for this research: first, his emphasis on the importance of stories, as explained above; and second, his specific interest in the relationship between political stories and political identities at both collective and individual levels.

In Tilly's way of thinking, stories are regarded as a combination of several social, political and cultural elements that allow us to examine the larger political and social processes. He claims that stories offer great potential to the researcher, in that "people package arguments in stories, replies to queries by means of stories, challenge each other's stories, modify or amplify their stories as the flow of conversation dictates…" (2002: 9). While stories are identified, produced and transformed by individuals, the transformation of the individual within the stories cannot be ignored. In other words, while, in Tilly's terms, "superior" and "standard" stories are modified and amplified by individuals, the identities of those individuals are transformed. Although Tilly does not state this argument in such explicit terms, he does say that "Identities are social arrangements reinforced by socially constructed and continuously renegotiated stories" (2002: xiii). In his opinion, identities presented in stories are a combination of the attributes, experiences and consciousness shared by many individuals (2002: 10).

Besides Tilly's contribution, narrative research in general, and personal narratives in particular, have also been used as an analytical tool in political science. Patterson and Monroe's study *Narrative in Political Science* (1998) presents an overview of the place of narratives in political science and the necessity of employing techniques of narrative analysis in studies of political public narratives. For them, "narrative becomes an invaluable tool for political scientists concerned with how such issues as identity group or individual influence behavior" (1998: 317). Bacon's analysis of the public political narrative of the Putin-Medvedev regime in Russia is another example of a narrative work in political science. To reveal the motivations, the world view and the inconsistencies in public political narratives, Bacon presented how the techniques of narrative analysis provide explanatory, critical and predictive insights

(Bacon, 2012: 769). Dienstag's study *Dancing in Chains (1997)* also discusses the role of the narrative in relation to memory in the perception of history and identity.

Another work influencing the definition and perception of narratives and the political identity building processes in this thesis is Molly Andrews' (2007) book about the relationship between the stories people tell about their lives and the political frames that form the context of those stories. Andrews states that "when we relate stories of our lives, we implicitly communicate to others something of our political world-views" (2007: 2). The way in which individuals articulate their personal narratives to meta narratives is a political practice in itself. When producing our stories, we relate the facts that we believe to be true, signal the groups to which we feel we belong, and specify the things that annoy us. As such, narratives are always political, in that they indicate the positionality of the narrator, even when they are apparently personal narratives (2007: 9). Riessman (2008) concurs that narratives do political work: "The social role of stories - how they are connected to the flow of power in the wider world - is an important facet of narrative theory" (2008: 8). Andrews highlights further the embedded feature of narratives in the cultural and social stock of society. The link between the narrative and the way in which political identities are constructed has great importance in this research, in which it is argued that through the stories that people tell about themselves and others, they create their political identities. Individuals recognise their own personal political positions within the narratives they produce, and are also reproduced within this process.

The popularity of narrative research in political psychology is stressed by Hammack and Pilecki (2012). While their interest is in history, political science and psychology, which is completely different to the epistemological and methodological assumptions of this research, their approach to political identity and political narratives is eye-opening. They argue that the narrative approach is well-positioned to answer questions of how social organisations influence thought, feeling and action, and how individuals resist and attempt to reinvent social order through story-making at multiple levels. Their interest in narratives at the levels of nation-state, community and individual subjectivity, and their emphasis on the concepts of social

categories, collective memory, social representations of history and collective identity, offer an efficient means of seeing political identity in a wider political, social and historical context (2012: 77–78). They note that "the process of story-making and narrative engagement does not present passive endeavours" (2012: 79). Their political psychology approach, which refers to the mutually constitutive relationship between language, thought and social structure, highlights the mediating potential of individual narratives. In their own words, "we engage with a storied social ecology as we engage in social practice, and our relationship to that practice is mediated by narrative" (2012: 79). In addition to the mutual influence between identities and stories, it should also be stated at this point that narrative impacts upon the perception of political structures in the minds of individuals. Patterson and Monroe (1998) assert that,

> *"Insofar as narrative affects our perceptions of political reality, which in turn affects our actions in response to or in anticipation of political events, narrative plays a critical role in the construction of political behaviour" (1998: 315–16).*

Literature relating to the topic of narratives also discusses the impact of "big stories" on individual perceptions of the world and the process of constructing political identities. The interaction between big stories and political identities cannot be ignored, but it is also necessary to look at individual stories, which may challenge the meta-narratives. In this study, I claim that Turkish nationalism is already a "superior story" produced by the state, army and individuals, but not a static entity, in that it only includes the same types of practices that aim to contribute to the big narrative. Personal stories about ethnic identity, based on the perceptions and daily encounters of individuals, are the other side of the process in the production of nationalism, and these stories require specific scholarly attention. In other words, the personal stories of individuals should be taken into account in any attempt to understand the common patterns and rupture points of the narratives of nationalism. As Patterson and Monroe state, the use of personal narratives can be be read as an attempt to capture the world (Patterson & Monroe, 1998: 328), and "nowhere is this more starkly and politically demonstrated than in narratives of national identity" (1998: 322).

It is apparent that although political narratives change dramatically, the perceptions and practices of the individual and the cultural aspects of nationalism do not undergo a parallel transformation at an equivalent speed. By focusing on the micro level of the ethnic identity stories of Kurdish and Turkish individuals, it becomes possible to gain insight into personal experiences, the knowledge that people develop from such experiences and the process by which personal stories are produced.

3.3. Talking Politics, Conversational Resources and Personal Experience

In this research, the personal accounts of the respondents are analysed with reference to the specific historical and political context within which they are situated. Their narratives present a significant opportunity to observe the ways in which people order their experiences within their own political constructions. While talking about politics, individuals reveal their positions, ordering their accounts around the "concept of self" that they build for themselves. As Gamson notes, "A variety of larger collective identities are, in fact, brought into play as they talk about politics" (1992: 115). Providing an account of a particular subject, such as ethnicity or nationalism, creates an opportunity for the re-interpretation of past lived experiences. In the act of providing an account of the personal experiences, individuals also reconceptualise their self-identity. This raises the following questions: What conversational resources are employed by the respondents in their accounts? Where does personal experience stand within the hierarchy of other sources of knowledge?

Political issues and developments occurring in the political arena mean little to ordinary people. Talking about politics emerges as an efficient way of understanding and making points about political issues. People create or narrate stories in order to situate themselves within these stories; such stories may be about themselves, or about someone else that they had heard or observed. People need knowledge stocks if they are to engage in daily political discussions. In other words, people draw from different knowledge stocks in order to understand and frame events, and transform this information into personal accounts in daily language.

It is apparent that media discourse is the most common source of information on political issues among ordinary people. That said, as Gamson points out, media discourse cannot be regarded as the only such source, in that "popular wisdom" and "personal experience" also play a significant role in people's understanding and narration of political issues (1992: xi). In his study, which aims to understand the process behind the construction of meaning, Gamson claims that media discourse, popular wisdom and personal experiences are employed together by individuals to different degrees, depending on the content of the political issue. He goes on to state that people combine these resources in order to make sense of a political issue (1992: 117). In accordance with the main themes of this research, Gamson claims that; "People are not so passive, people are not so dumb and people negotiate with media messages in complicated ways that vary from issue to issue." (1992: 4).

The second conversational resource that Gamson notes is "popular wisdom", being the shared knowledge that "everyone" holds. Although personal experience is unique, "the greater the degree of homogeneity of life experiences among a group of people, the greater the popular wisdom available to them as a resource" (Gamson, 1992: 123-124). In this regard, popular wisdom can be defined as a combination of personal and cultural beliefs. One's experiences gain meaning by linking to these cultural resources. The existence of similar experiences among a diverse group of people provides a link between the personal, cultural and collective (Gamson, 1992: 126).

In addition to these conversational resources, experience has a great importance in order to understand the ways of accounting of respondents on the ethnic conflict and ethnic identities. The notion of experience emerges as a broad area in literature of narrative. Narrative encompasses experience. As Lieblich and Josselson (1995) indicate, the ultimate aim of the narrative investigation of human life is the interpretation of experience (1995: ix). Analysis in narrative studies makes possible to see thee ways of telling about experience (Riessman, 1993:3-4). Connelly and Clandinin state that "Narrative is a way of characterizing the phenomena of human experience and its study, which is appropriate to many social science fields" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2011: 2). Narrative meaning is a process that orders experiences into meaningful

plots (Polkinghorne, 1988: 1). In relation to these arguments, Somers and Gibson (1994) note that "...stories guide action; that people construct identities, by locating themselves or being located with a repertoire of emplotted stories" (1994: 38). Within all these approaches, experience is seen as a thing that is constituted through narrative, and that allows people to make sense of events and encounters. Somers and Gibson go one step further, claiming that through these experience-based narratives, "people are guided to act in certain ways" (1994: 38).

The role of personal experiences in the ways in which people construct and perform narratives is an important aspect of this research. However, as Scott (1991) argues, experience cannot be seen as a starting point that requires the development of explanations. In this regard, experience cannot be accepted as the only factor determining the power in the construction of identities and the ways of practicing ethnicity. As Gamson states:

> *"Sometimes the story is not about oneself but about oneself but about one's spouse, partner, or child. At the other extreme, people tell stories about friends of friends or about someone they once knew at work. It is difficult to know exactly where to draw the line at which experiential knowledge is so vicarious that it hardly seems personal at all (Gamson, 1992: 123).*

Scott (1991) also points to the need to consider experience in a historical context, claiming that without contextualising it, experience means nothing. In this regard, personal experience can be understood as an element within the process of identity construction, and is influenced by the historical context and within other wider narratives. For Scott, experience functions within an ideological construction, and experience represents not only a starting point for the knowledge that individuals develop, but also *"*naturalizes categories such as man, woman, black, w
hite, heterosexual, homosexual by treating them as given characteristics of individuals" (1991: 782).

Within the discussions on narratives and experience, the point often stressed is the function of narrative/narrating in making sense of experiences. This means that

individuals take an active role in the processes of experiencing and interpreting within a meta-narrative, which emerge as parts of the teller's "concept of self", while "subjects are also constituted through experience" (Scott, 1991: 779).

Although personal experience is regarded as one of the crucial elements affecting perceptions, ideas and emotions, it should not be considered as the only source of knowledge, but rather provides the grounds for the explanation of what kind of knowledge is produced. Scott stresses the unmediated features of experiences, which are also discussed by Polkinghorne; "What we experience is a consequence of the action of our organizing schemes of the components of our involvement with the world" (Polkinghorne: 1988:13).

Experience, then, is defined as the foundation of the narrative that is both interpreted and needs to be interpreted. Narrative is regarded as a way of ordering experience into a meaningful entity. Through the perceptions that derive from experiences, people develop ideas and articulate them within the specific social and historical context. As Whitebrook states,

> *"...our sense of our own identity originates in appropriations of the structure of public discourse between particular and singular persons for the ordering of private experience and the expression of our personal identities as singularities in public space" (2001:9).*

3.4. Resistance through Narrative

In everyday life we never stop telling stories, because that is how we make sense of our place in the world, what came before, where we are now and where we are headed. Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) state that the narrative approach begins and ends with everyday life, as the experiences, speech, purposes and expectations of agents as they express them in their stories about themselves (1997: xvi). Narratives are "the real social experiences of human beings, produced in everday life" (Negt & Kluge, 1988: 60). Likely everyday life is not composed only of continuities, a narrative functions not only as an articulation with meta-narratives, as counter-narratives emerge as another dominant aspect of personal and meta-narratives.

Besides building connections between personal and social dimensions, a second important feature of personal narratives for the researcher is their ability to reveal the power relations – hegemonic and counter positions – at every level of society. Patterson and Monroe (1998) suggest that when the teller speaks about the common or everyday, the narrative functions as a tool for highlighting and calling into question what we take for granted in our daily lives (1998: 321). As such, "it provides a way to see from a new perspective what we otherwise overlook" (1998: 321).

The potential of resistance provided by narratives generally and personal narratives in particular are another discussion point in literature. Brockmeier and Carbaugh (2001) state that "story telling becomes for its supporter an act of resistance against a dominant 'Cartesian' paradigm of rationality" (2001: 9). Somers and Gibson (1994) characterize narratives as the "epistemological other" of sociology. As Borisenkova (2009) asserts;

> *"Narrative inquiry assumes that the context, the sequence in which social phenomena occur and are then described, and the time characteristics of the investigation made, have a substantial impact on a sociological research enterprise. These insights ease an escape from the idea of sociology as a discipline developing nomological knowledge. A narrative approach does not propose a radical alternative to science, but aims to challenge sociological pretentious claims to provide universal explanations of phenomena, and reminds us of the great potential of language" (2009:1).*

Narratives provide the opportunity for individuals to challenge meta-narratives. We all create our own narratives using the toolkit that is culturally available to us (Bruner, 1987: 15). Practicing ways of ethnicity in everyday life and the ways of talking on and with ethnic identities includes interwoven relations with 'power' in itself. Personal narratives tend to contribute to meta-narratives and articulate with hegemonic narrative forms. Andrews (2004) argues that master narratives are powerful structures that allow people to identify what is assumed to be a normative experience. Their power "derives from their internalization. Wittingly or unwittingly

we become stories we know and a master narrative is reproduced ... When our own experiences do not match the master narratives with which we are familiar, or we come to question the foundations of those, dominant tales, we are confronted with a challenge" (2004:1).

It is for this reason that people position themselves differently in relation to meta narratives. On the other hand, narratives present a powerful resource for the challenging of preveiling ideas and provide insights into the particulars of the lived experience (Patterson & Munroe 1998: 318). Plummer (2009) argues that narratives resist larger social and cultural patterns:

> *"Many stories of lives are counter stories – they start to break down any claims for grand theories about lives. At their best, they challenge and redirect our thinking. At their worst, they tell us the same old story and utter it in cliché form" (2009: 6).*

Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) stress the resistance function of narratives, which is used against the mainstream and approved version of reality by marginal and out groups (1997: xiv). Researchers who use narrative methodologies tend to focus specifically on the members of marginalized and subordinated groups in society, who are able to provide the most useful kind of data for making visible the power differentials that exist within society (Elliot, 2008: 145). For Delgado (2001), narratives provide a language that bridges the gaps in the imagination that reinforce the notion of difference: "Narrative reduces alienation for members of excluded groups, while offering opportunities for members of the majority group to meet them halfway" (2001: 44).

While narratives offer a great opportunity for marginalized and subordinated groups to voice their concerns, perspectives and ideologies, this research does not focus exclusively on minority group members. The group that wanted to be heard included ordinary people from both Kurdish and Turkish ethnic groups, specifically those who do not actively participate in politics in their everyday lives, and most probably do not even vote. It was the intention of the research to give them voice through their personal

narratives and to learn the common and conflicting patterns of their narratives on nationalism.

The conflicting relationships between meta-narratives and counter-political narratives that exist within institutions, political groups, political parties and individuals, should be seen also as a particular sphere in which individual identities, perceptions and political ideas are constructed. Ewick and Silbey (1995) argue that a relationship exists between narrative identity and power relations through the concepts of "hegemonic tales" and "subversive stories". They state that stories, on the whole, are more likely to articulate and reproduce existing, mainstream and sanctioned relations of power and inequality (1995: 212). When the narrative emphasizes a particular situation or subject, it erases the links between the particular and the general. On the other hand, the act of narration makes connections between individual experiences and subjectivities (1995: 200). The employment of personal narratives within a social and historical context has the potential to allow subordinated groups to make their voices heard by a researcher. Besides the role of researcher, the one telling the story also gains a chance to create his/her own voice within the account.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter touches upon the meaning of narratives, and the ways of defining and using narratives, within various disciplines. It discusses the relationship between narrative/personal narratives and different conversational resources in order to understand the contextual aspects of the political accounts of the research respondents. The importance of personal experience within these conversational resources is discussed with reference to the literature on political narrative and identity. As argued in this research, personal narratives have great potential to follow how ethnic identities are constructed. Furthermore, taking accounting of experiences related to ethnic identity and nationalism creates room for explanations of the self and facing up to contradictions through such accounts. This was evident not only for the researcher, but also for those relating their experiences, who all faced at least one moment of recognition that forced them to think about their own political position,

and thus recreate themselves again. They heard their own voices while narrating and re-created their positions and sought to legitimise their accounts. In this regard, the most important thing that should be stressed upon related to the personal narrative is its function in the deconstruction of identities and the power it holds in challenging meta-narratives.

4. On Fieldwork Process

Previous chapters built a conceptual framework for the thesis by providing the background of the Turkish context, and outlining and critically reviewing the existing literature and theoretical approaches with regard to concepts of nationalism and ethnicity in everyday life and narrative inquiry.

This chapter focuses on the fieldwork process, before moving onto an analysis of data in the subsequent chapters. In addition to providing details of the fieldwork I conducted in Ankara between March and November 2011, I will outline the sampling framework and piloting methods utilised, the recruitment of participants, the phase of conducting qualitative interviews, ethical considerations, self-reflexivity and positioning, and limitations of the data.

4.1. Sampling Framework and Piloting

Ankara[30], the capital city of Turkey, is home to 5.1 million people[31] and is the second most populous province of the country after Istanbul.[32] During the fieldwork period, five pilot interviews were conducted in Ankara, and after deciding upon the sampling framework, a further 40 semi-structured interviews were conducted with Kurdish and Turkish men and women, aged 17–70 (*see Table 1*).

The main reason for conducting this research in Ankara was my interest in the daily and less radicalised types of narrative forms and the interaction between Kurdish and Turkish individuals. My knowledge of the social and political context of Ankara is

[30] See Figure I and Figure II for 'Map of Ankara'.

31 According to 2013 census results (retrieved from http://rapor.tuik.gov.tr/reports/rwservlet?adnksdb2&ENVID=adnksdb2Env&report=wa_turkiye_ilce_koy_sehir.RDF&p_il1=6&p_kod=1&p_yil=2012&p_dil=1&desformat=html).

32 The province has 25 districts, and the interviews and fieldwork observations were conducted in seven urban districts that represent the urban characteristics of the city: Cankaya, Altındag, Mamak, Yenimahalle, Etimesgut, Sincan and Kecioren. Cankaya is known as the home of Kemalist people, Altındag is a suburban area at the centre of the city, Etimesgut and Sincan are popular among the lower class, religious groups and conservative people, and Kecioren and Yenimahalle are increasingly home to the new middle class in Ankara (see Table 1).

based on my experience of having lived there, in various places, for 10 years. Besides attending university in Ankara, I also worked in various jobs in the city, both during my studies and after graduation, and this had given me access to a wide range of networks that would allow me to access my participants easily. Besides these facilitating factors, the political atmosphere in the city does not see the violent conflicts or traumatic encounters like those seen in the Kurdish territory, and so seemed more appropriate for a research of quotidian and ordinary encounters and narrative forms. Ankara represents a relatively "normal" political atmosphere when compared with many other places in Turkey, such as in eastern Kurdish cities like Diyarbakır, where violent conflicts are common, and in western and southern cities including Mersin, Izmir, Antalya and Istanbul, where the massive and sudden forced migration of Kurds had a marked impact on the encounters and narrative forms of the Kurdish and Turkish respondents.

While these two factors made the selection of the fieldwork site easier, deciding upon a specific sampling criterion was not so straightforward, and it evolved over the course of the fieldwork. Initially, prior to the pilot phase, the sampling criterion was based on the different districts and neighbourhoods of urban Ankara, which I believed corresponded to different political orientations to a certain extent. It was on this basis that I believed Ankara would provide a good sampling frame for the exploration of ethnic identities, practices and perceptions of nationalism; however, after starting to conduct the pilot interviews I realised that this was not the case. For instance, none of the first five participants spoke about their own neighbourhoods. When prompted to talk about the relationships within their neighbourhoods, they stated that they knew little about their neighbours. As one person put it, "I am working very long hours, and so I do not have time to stay at home and get to know my neighbours. I do not even know my next-door neighbour." When urged to talk about their personal experiences of their living places, they opted rather to tell stories about their hometowns, where they had lived many years earlier. Inasmuch as this research focuses on the personal encounters of Kurdish and Turkish people in Ankara, the participants' personal stories of their past lives in their hometown would not produce satisfactory data, and this limitation led me to reconsider the sampling

criteria. I realised that the concept of "encounter" was not applied by the participants to the encounters that occur in their living spaces, as it is possible to have encounters with "other" members of society in different spheres such as in public areas, schools, workplaces, streets, etc. The personal "encounters" that I experienced during the pilot phase helped me to reconceptualise the sampling criteria and to make a final decision on a concrete research site.

In the first week of fieldwork I took a *dolmus*, minibus from Kızılay, the most central part of Ankara, to go to my flat. In this mode of public transport, passengers help each other by delivering the fare from the back of the minibus to the driver. This is part of the cultural code in Ankara practiced in everyday life. I was sitting at the back and, along with those seated around me, gave the fare to the person who was sitting just in front of me. After a while I noticed that a woman who was sitting in the middle of the *dolmus* was refusing to pass the money forward, and a heated discussion broke out. The woman was talking in a different accent, apparently Russian, and said: "I do not have to give your money. Stand up and give it to the driver yourself like I did." The woman who had asked her to pass the money forward yelled back: "You have to, because you live in this country, you eat our bread. You are not even Turkish. You live here and earn your money from this land, but you refuse to obey the rules." The Russian woman started to cry and said, "I work hard to earn my money, why would I eat your bread?" I listened for a while, but apart from these two women, nobody talked. When the Turkish woman launched into a nationalist tirade, I got annoyed and intervened, saying: "You cannot force anybody to obey your cultural rules. If she does not want to pass your money, you cannot force her." The woman then turned her anger towards me and started to yell at me. Her exact words were: "I am a real Turk, not a fake one like you. If you were a loyal and true citizen you would not defend this foreign woman from me." I replied: "What do you want to do? Do you want to lynch this woman? Are you waiting for support from us?" She answered "I am a nationalist person. Do you understand? If I needed help, everyone in this *dolmus* would help me, except you. There are just two of you, this woman and you, who are the foreigners here."

This was quite a traumatic experience, just before starting to conduct the interviews for my study. At first I did not know how I should behave; whether I should get involved or just observe the situation; but after seeing the situation escalate in favour of the Turkish woman, I felt that someone had to help the Russian woman**.** This was exactly the kind of situation that I had set out to study – the experiences and encounters of ordinary people in their daily lives. While the situation and the actors involved were not same as the subject of my research, the sentiment that I witnessed and the argument in which I became involved were exactly what I wanted to observe during my fieldwork. I knew that such nationalist reactions had the potential to transform into something more serious, and this experience showed that encounters could happen anywhere and at any time. When it came to the interviews, the participants were most likely to tell stories about their encounters with "others" in their workplaces, schools and different public spaces. Rather than limiting the research to just one space that may be encountered in the flow of everyday life, it was deemed more appropriate to move the "personal experiences" of the participants with each other to the centre of the research as a sampling criterion. Within this huge geographical area I decided to put occupations at the centre of the study, and to follow the forms of encounters and the ways nationalist narratives are produced in the workplace. It seemed most appropriate to concentrate on different occupation types, such as hairdressers, market traders, shopkeepers, students, housewives etc., in order to access as wide a variety of forms of encounter possible in the different spaces within which everyday life occurs. In this regard, I aimed to recruit participants of different ages, economic status and academic attainment as much as possible.

4.2. Accessing Participants

Sourcing individual participants for the study was achieved based on "snowballing" through both acquaintances and the participants themselves. Arranging interviews took some time, even after using personal contacts such as friends, relatives, neighbours, etc., and gaining access to working people was especially difficult, in that they were relatively mobile and spent much of their time outside the home. After piloting, I realised that it was not possible to conduct interviews without providing

personal references, and so after each interview I asked the participant to speak to people they knew about me in order to arrange further interviews. I used my personal contacts to reach people from different occupation groups. To begin with, I asked my hairdresser, whom I had known for 10 years, if he would be willing to be interviewed, and he became my first participant. Thereafter, I discerned that small business owners could be considered an appropriate profile for the research due to their vast experience in the workplace with both tradesmen and customers. In the course of the interviews with Turks, the dominance of Kurds in the marketplace was frequently underlined by the Turkish respondents, so I then looked also for sellers in marketplaces. Finally, as Ankara is known as a city of civil servants and students, I endeavoured to include these groups from a variety of different areas in the study, as well as one housewife and one unemployed person.

Conducting an interview with a researcher on such a sensitive collective issue was a tough experience for both the Kurdish and Turkish respondents. Although the signs of conflict are more firmly embedded in the collective memory of Kurdish people, they were more enthusiastic to take part in the research. After gaining their trust, it was easier to reach Kurdish interviewees thanks to their close-knit community networks, although gaining trust in this context was almost impossible without a contact person. Most of the Kurdish participants stressed that without a reliable contact person, it would be impossible for me to interview Kurds. While the contact person was therefore quite important in building a relationship of trust with the respondents, they nevertheless continually stated their suspicion about my identity. As Nazım said:

> *"I have no idea about your political view or your identity. You may be a police officer. You are interviewing me here, and I am telling you everything I believe and I experienced, but I am not afraid of you because of my political ideology" (Nazım, Kurdish, male, 36).*

Being suspicious about the research and the researcher did not prevent such people from taking part in the study, and many were keen to talk about their general political ideas and to share their persoxnal experiences; however it should be remembered that

the respondents may have been reluctant to relate certain aspects of their experiences, or they may have chosen to soften the tone of their narratives.

4.3. Interviews

4.3.1. Interview Questions

As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, an interview schedule, which included an introduction to the research and list of interview questions, was prepared prior to the interview phase. The introductory speech was as follows: "I am conducting research on the conflict between Kurds and Turks in Turkey. Besides the internal war between the PKK and the Turkish State, I want to hear your opinions of this conflict. What do you think about the Kurdish Question and Turkish nationalism? What do you think about the Kurds/Turks around you?" Before I could finish this brief introduction, the Turkish respondents started to give me their account of the Kurdish Question, making use of the arguments of Turkish nationalism. When constructing an account referencing the inclusive features of Turkish nationalism, the Turkish respondents tended to accuse Kurdish society of Kurdish nationalism, while the Kurdish respondents spoke mostly about the Kurdish Question in order to support or challenge the arguments of Turkish nationalism about Kurds and the Kurdish ethnic identity. In this regard, all of the personal accounts given by both the Kurdish and Turkish respondents were based on the notion of nationalism, although from different perspectives.

Once the respondents started to build their accounts, as a researcher I intervened only to remind them of the focus of the interview. The questions that I asked throughout the interviews aimed only to prompt the respondents to provide more personal accounts, for example:

- Do you have any relationships with Kurds/Turks in your personal life?
- What do you think about the Kurdish/Turkish friends, relatives, neighbours etc. in your immediate surroundings?

- Have you had any negative experiences with them?

Through these three questions I attempted to gain information about their personal experiences rather than simple repetitions of media discourse, and other than these prompts, I did not need to ask any further questions. In fact, the respondents did not need to be asked questions about the topic of the research.

4.3.2. Duration and Location of the Interviews

Each interview lasted between one and one-and-a-half hours on average, and all interviews were tape recorded. Interview notes were written up and personal field observations were made on the same day of the interview to avoid problems associated with recall. One interview, conducted with Pelin, a 23 year-old Turkish woman from a quite wealthy family, was exceptionally short. At the time of the interview, which lasted only 15 minutes, she had just graduated from a private university in Ankara and was in the process of looking for a job. Her interview consisted of her repeating that she had never been interested in politics, and that she was scared of answering my questions. The interview practically came to an end with her first answer: *"I have never met a Kurdish person,"* and I could not persuade her to talk about her personal experiences and observations of Kurdish people. She also refused to talk about the Kurdish Question, not because of her political stance or security concerns but because she believed that she was not well enough versed about political issues to comment on the subject. Furthermore, she was also reluctant to talk about personal experiences unrelated to political issues, and in the end I felt as though I was forcing her to be interviewed, when she had actually volunteered to take part.

The interviews were generally conducted in the participants' homes or workplaces, or in public spaces like cafes. Prior to the pilot phase I had thought it would be most appropriate to meet the participants in public places in order to preserve a reasonable distance between myself as a researcher and the participant. However, some of the interviews conducted in public places, such as in cafes, were so affected by the noise that both the participant and I were uncomfortable during the conversation. As such,

when female participants invited me to their own homes, I accepted willingly, and at such times I was usually offered the best of what people could provide as a guest, and observed that they seemed very comfortable in this environment. For reasons of personal security and the need to follow common cultural codes as a member of Turkish society, I did not meet male participants in their own homes.

Some of the participants preferred to meet at their places of work due to their busy schedules, but after two frustrating experiences for the participants, I avoided arranging workplace interviews thereafter. The first of these arose during an interview with Aliye, who worked as a secretary for an NGO in the health sector. Her office was open plan, in which there were some chairs and desks for visitors. I went to her office during her lunch break, but just as we started to talk, a member of staff in the office, Recep, who was responsible for cleaning and serving tea and coffee, came into the Aliye's office to bring tea for us. After welcoming me, Recep initiated a conversation on an issue on which they had argued previously in a sarcastic tone. Aliye, as a Kurdish woman, used her surname in Kurdish in her work e-mail account, which in an official place was considered to be inappropriate by Recep and some of her other colleagues. Furthermore Aliye's choice to translate her surname in Kurdish was completely "unnecessary" for Recep. The conversation continued as follows:

> *Recep: What is Roj? What is the meaning of "roj"?*
> *Aliye: It means "day"[gün] in Turkish which is my surname. "Day". Do you understand?*
> *Recep: Who uses this word?*
> *Aliye: We use it. It means "day" in Kurdish.*
> *Recep: If you know the word for "day" in Turkish, why do you use "roj"? Why don't you write Aliye Gun ["day" in Turkish], rather than Aliye Roj?*
> *Aliye: It is my choice. (Becoming agitated and starting to defend herself)*
> *Recep: How is this choice? Don't do this again! (Laughing)*
> *Aliye: Please leave us.*

After this conversation, Recep left the room and Aliye provided me with the background of the issue: "Everyone can use any word in their e-mail addresses. They tried to suppress me, but I did not change it. I mean, I won't change my address. If I

used an English word in my address it won't be a problem. The problem is Kurdish." After she said this, Recep returned to the office, accompanied by another male staff member, and they sat at another desk, and tried to listen to our conversation. Their presence in the room annoyed Aliye and I finished the interview to protect her from any further potential inconvenience. Before I left the office we arranged a new place and time to meet, during which she explained that we had experienced:

> *"That day after you left I talked with Recep. I asked "why do you do this to me? Why do you wonder what we do, what we speak about?" I said "Look! She was my guest. She is conducting research. She wanted to ask me some questions like "how do you feel about being Kurdish?" Something like that. I just wanted to help her. That is why she came. I am very angry with you. You will never call me a Kurd again. I have a name. You will never call me Kurd" (Aliye, Kurdish, female, 43).*

Aliye's story shows how Kurdish people, as members of a minority group, come under pressure when talking about the Kurdish Question in public areas, such as the workplace. Explicit references to their ethnic identity, such as talking about the Kurdish issue, are usually regarded as "*boluculuk*" [separatism], and causes tension between them and the Turkish people around them. In contrast, the Kurdish Question is a normal and obvious part of daily conversation among Turks. While my participants anticipated that it would not be a problem for them to give an interview about Kurdish issues in a public place, some unpredictable situations arose, and the situation Aliye and I found ourselves in made me think about the responsibility of the researcher in providing a secure research environment for the participants.

Another interview experience, this time with a Turkish participant, highlighted that this is not a one-sided issue. Adem is a 42-year old salesman who works in several fruit and vegetable markets in Ankara, which are dominated by Kurdish traders. As Adem had no off day, we arranged to conduct the interview at his workplace. The dominance of Kurdish stallholders at the market was obvious, and when we started to talk, the owners of the other stalls wondered – most probably because of my gender – who I was and what we were doing. It was out of the ordinary for them to see a woman talking to one of their colleagues for more than an hour, and so to avoid

further questions, Adem told them that I was a relative who had come to visit him. While this response was sufficient to explain my presence and satisfy the other men's curiosity, Adem was visibly uncomfortable when speaking about "Kurds" and "the Kurdish Question" during the interview. As I did not want to pressure him into speaking, I suggested that we finish the interview, but when I was leaving he stated that if we conducted the interview in another place it would be better. This shows that being the member of a minority or majority group does not determine the default position of the participants. It is not easy for a Turkish person to express his views openly while surrounded by Kurdish people, and the setting in which the interview takes place may also be significant in determining the power relations. As a researcher I had to adapt to the changeable and unsettled structure of power while conducting the interviews.

Only one person refused to take part in an interview, a Kurdish man whom I knew from the university where I worked. He was reluctant to talk about such sensitive issues due to the bitter experiences of his family related to the Kurdish Question, and emphasised a desire to stay away from such things, openly expressing his fear of talking about the Kurdish Question due to his position as a civil servant.

4.3.3. Group Interviews

The interviews were intended to be individual face-to face-meetings, but despite endeavouring to arrange individual meetings, it was not possible all the time. Friends and neighbours of the participants would say hello to them in cafes or in their houses, and would sometimes contribute to the questions I asked. Sometimes the interview spontaneously became a group interview, which is more difficult to control due to many people giving answers at the same time. Nevertheless, these spontaneous situations provided an opportunity to observe changes in people's accounts when others are involved. During my interview with Sahin (Kurdish, male, 50), some of his neighbours dropped in for coffee. While talking about the Kurdish movement, Sahin underlined its legitimacy, referencing his own observations and personal

experiences. When his neighbours, who were Turkish, joined the discussion, they quickly dominated the discourse of the interview, and after their arrival, Sahin completely changed his perspective, stressing how Kurdish people pushed the limits by making inappropriate demands. After they left, Sahin said to me;

> *"Can you see the pressure on us? I like these people, but if I do not behave like this we cannot maintain friendships with these people. I have to do it. I have to hide my real political beliefs. Anyway, it is not so important for me. Politics is not as important as my neighbours." (Sahin, Kurdish, male, 50).*

On occasion I had to intervene in the conversations when it seemed likely that clashes could break out between the participants those who had joined in, as I did not want to cause problems for my participants.

The participants did not always limit the content of their accounts during these spontaneous group discussions. During one particular interview, held in a coffee shop, Nazım, a 30-year old Kurdish man, was prompted to tell more about his personal experiences. What started out as a one-to-one interview changed after we were joined by one of his friends (Mahmut, Kurdish, male, 40). Nazım was giving his political opinion on the legitimacy of the Kurdish movement and the ways in which he supported it, while Mahmut just listened. However, when I asked a question aiming to prompt Nazım to talk about his personal experiences, Mahmut began talking about one of his own personal experiences, and reminded Nazım of events that had occurred when they had lived together. At this point, Nazım also started to provide an account that was dominated by personal experiences, spurring him to give an account of his own ideas and feelings about the Kurdish Question and its effects on his own life.

4.4. Talking About Politics from Macro to Micro Perspectives and Story-worthiness

During the interviews, discussions of politics as a practice and the means of expressing political ideas and personal experiences emerged as a controversial issue

for many of the interviewees and for me as a researcher. As a semi-experienced researcher in the field, initiating interviews and encouraging interviewees to talk more about their personal experiences were tough obstacles for me to handle. Most of the participants were not used to discussing politics, and many found it strange being encouraged to talk about personal experiences relating to a political concept. The majority of respondents did not understand why I wanted to learn about their personal experiences rather than their general political ideas. As Chase asserts, "interviewees often speak in generalities rather than specifics, even when talking about their experiences, in that they assume that researchers are interested in what is general rather than particular about their experience" (Chase, 2005: 661). Even during the pilot stage of the research it was evident that there was a risk that participants would make only general comments on the issue, without reference to their own concrete experiences. Both Turkish and Kurdish interviewees tended to talk about the Kurdish Question, which was considered to be an abstract political matter, in a general sense. The Turkish respondents in particular rarely engaged with the subject of the research in their accounts, in that they comprehended the issue to be a macro and abstract "political" matter that had very little influence in their everyday lives and activities. In this regard, my efforts to encourage them to talk at a personal and everyday level were seen as "unnecessary". While the Kurdish participants tended to begin the interview with a general statement of their political ideas, they were more able to transform their accounts from a general narrative to a personal one. For the first three interviews I thought that the tendency to speak in general rather than in personal terms was my mistake, but I soon realised that even when I tried to guide the participants at the beginning of the interview, they followed the same general path when giving their accounts.

It could be said that the Turkish participants began their accounts with a contradiction: denying the Kurdish Question at a macro-political level, but being quite enthusiastic to talk about Kurds with reference to their daily experiences. As will be discussed in detail in subsequent sections, while the Turkish respondents talked about Kurds rather than the Kurdish Question, they tended to refer to observations made by Turks in general rather than their own personal experiences.

Inasmuch as quite similar stories and themes were underlined through the narratives of the Turkish respondents, it can be said that there is a common repertoire of feelings and ideas about Kurds in the collective account of the Turkish respondents. For most of the Turkish respondents it could be observed that their involvement in this research was seen an opportunity to voice their discontent about Kurds, and they sought to legitimise their political stances by reflecting on the daily struggles they face that they think it is because of Kurds.

It can be said that the interviews tended to be composed of two distinct parts: political speeches and political stories. Although this partition was not designed, either by me or the respondents, in the pilot process it was these two distinct themes that formed the structure of the accounts. The first parts, "speaking politically", were composed of more vague political speeches based on media coverage of the Kurdish Question; while the second section, "telling stories", was based on the everyday experiences of participants themselves. The summaries of the Kurdish Question made the first part of the interviews more superficial than the second, which tended to include detailed evaluations. General political speeches functioned as tools by which to frame the issue, specifying the political ideas of the individual by evoking dominant political clichés, slogans and common-sense references. In other words, the first part of the interviews was devoted to general political talk in daily language, and functioned as a means of framing the issue within the borders of the meta-narrative. The interviewees' general responses provided insight into how they perceived arguments of the meta-narrative, which over the years has become structured, transformed and modified.

As discussed above, the Kurdish Question in particular was seen by the Turkish respondents as a macro-political issue that does not affect the everyday lives of "ordinary people". This may be considered true, to some extent, as the war between Kurdish guerrillas and Turkish army took place within a certain geographical area. Accordingly, for those who did not fulfil their military service in Kurdish territory or those who do not reside in places that received migrants from Kurdish territory, their encounters with Kurds would usually occur in very limited spaces and at limited

times. It is more likely for these people to refer to official ideologies or media coverage while reflecting on the Kurdish Question. In this sense, I chose not to start the interviews directly addressing the Kurdish Question, but rather with the question, "Where are you from originally?" This is part of the prominent cultural code that is followed when initiating a relationship in Turkey by people of all economic and cultural classes. Although in highly-populated Turkish cities, a large proportion of the population has migrated from other parts of the country, their hometown is still of great importance as an element of identity. Thus, for a local person, the question "where are you from?" is understood as a first step to starting a conversation, and by using this familiar question I aimed to create a friendly, relaxed atmosphere for the interviewee. As an additional advantage, the question presented a great opportunity steer the discussion towards the subject of ethnic identity and related personal experiences. After the introductory section, the question "Do you know any Kurdish/Turkish people around you?" elicited a free narrative on the Kurdish Question, which then linked to personal narratives on aspects of the experiences of the interviewee. Even though at the beginning of the fieldwork it looked like it would be impossible to encourage people to talk about the micro aspects of the issue, speaking generally on politics increasingly appeared as a means by which the personal, historical and socio-political framework of the narratives was constructed. As a sign of the politicised nature of the daily lives of "ordinary people", speaking about political issues is an observable daily routine and a prominent way of socialising, especially for men, regardless of background, in Turkey. People can be observed chatting about the politics in workplaces, schools, shops, taxis, bus stops, and so on, and it does not matter whether the people know each other or not. "What will happen to this country" (*Nolacak bu memleketin hali*) is a particular type of conversation in Turkish cultural account, similar to the inquiry "Where are you from?" Controversially, the second indicates an inquiry of distinguished identity according to territorial or cultural distinctions, while the first defines those involved in the conversation as "national subjects". This practice, which provides a chance to hear different ideas about daily political issues, also makes people more spirited and enthusiastic about taking part in any political discussion. Familiarity with discussions of politics in everyday life led the participants of the study to speak generally about

contemporary political topics as they are covered in the media, rather than thinking about how these political matters affect their daily lives and the possible effects on their perceptions. This tendency was problematic in the interview phase of the research, as for most of the participants, politics was seen as a serious issue that was worthy of discussion, yet personal experiences were not seen as story-worthy. It became obvious that there is an approved hierarchy between types of accounts, from "less worthy of telling" to "more worthy of telling", with personal stories at the bottom. News from any source is seen as more credible than a participant's own account, although at this point it is necessary to state that this attitude was observed less among the Kurdish respondents. As the Kurdish participants had witnessed a wider variety of political experiences in their daily lives due to their ethnic identity, and because they listen to different stories about "being a Kurd" in society, they have a remarkable awareness about the "importance of the daily, private and ordinary" in political affairs. However, it was obvious that this kind of awareness was in direct relation to being political and having a political identity.

4.5. Some Particularities of Women Participants

It is necessary to underline a key difference between male and female participants related to their perception of the "story-worthiness" of their accounts. Although a comparison of men and women in terms of narratives, political perspectives and perceptions was not a focus of this research, gendered differences emerged as a prominent element in the themes that appeared in my observation notes due to my identity as a woman. Interest in and talking about politics are considered "masculine" traits in Turkey, where men are able to talk freely about politics, regardless of their socio-economic background or level of education. In contrast, a woman`s interest in politics is usually only regarded as legitimate when the woman is educated. This social norm makes women think that they are not sufficiently informed to talk about politics.

Female participants voiced their concerns about not being sufficiently educated or knowledgeable as a hindrance to their being interviewed, to which I responded that

the aim of the interview was to learn about their experiences regardless of their level of education or specific interest in politics. Those who were not convinced tried to arrange another participant for me who they regarded as more educated and aware of such issues, thinking that this would be more helpful to me. Some of the participants became relaxed after my explanation, although others remained nervous about talking on such issues. As Gulsum said, "I do not know much about these issues; I may say something wrong. I do not believe that talking to me will help you" (Gulsum, Turkish, female, 49). Besides this apprehension, the other key issue for the women participants was their tendency to talk more about their personal experiences than their male counterparts, who regarded personal experiences as not worth discussing. While this tendency can be considered a result of the common perception that "politics is a masculine area", even educated and activist women were apt to talk personally and to give accounts that were dominated by their own stories. In contrast, the men's narratives were based mostly on normative political knowledge.

4.6. Emotional Moments

Some interviews were more difficult to conduct than others, as people were compelled to recall sad memories or experiences. During her interview, Dilan (Kurdish, female, 18) cried, and we had to pause the interview three times to allow her to compose herself. The interview questions brought back bitter memories of her father's trial as a member of the *PKK* during which he was tortured in prison. She spoke of how she lost her father just after his release by the court pending a trial nine years ago. I suggested finishing the interview several times, but she insisted on telling her story. When the interview was over, Dilan said that she was not ashamed of telling her story:

> *"Those responsible for my father's death are the ones that should be ashamed. I want to tell the story to everyone, as everyone should learn about the cruelty of this state and how it took the life of my father. I will never forgive them for this. I feel more relaxed after talking to you; it has been like sharing these things with a close friend" (Dilan, Kurdish, female, 18).*

Similar to Dilan's relief after telling her personal story, other participants also expressed positive feelings following their interviews, and some even thanked to me for giving them the opportunity to talk about politics and for being the first person to ever ask them about their ideas on these issues. Furthermore, some complained about not being able to discuss these issues with anyone before, and said that they had enjoyed taking part in the research. As Narin said;

> *"I didn't even realise that I had an idea about politics. I always thought of it as a male issue and something in which I do not need to be involved. Following this interview, I recognise that politics is not just the news we watch on TV. It is in our lives. Even my personal experiences are part of political issues." (Kurdish, female, 31)*

Although it was no surprise to learn that the women were unfamiliar with talking about politics, Yavuz's (Kurdish, male, 26) statement after his interview highlights the limitations in how men talk about politics: "In the many years that I have talked about these political issues with many men, nobody wanted to learn about my own experiences and how I lived. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to express my real feelings" (Yavuz, Kurdish, male, 26).

4.7. Positionality, "Self-Reflexivity" and the Multiple Positions of the Researcher

Discussions in research literature of "insiderness" and "outsiderness" capture the unstable position of the researcher throughout the fieldwork period, and it is quite hard to determine my position as both an insider and outsider in this research. This research aims to explore and evaluate the differences, similarities, ruptures and relationality that emerge through the personal accounts of both Kurdish and Turkish individuals. In this respect, the factors that make me an insider in the field, that is, being Turkish, and acknowledging the cultural codes and political language of the Turkish group transform simultaneously my position into that of an outsider among the Kurds.

The insider perspective may question the ability of the outsider scholar to understand the experiences of minority groups, and may lead to the belief that an outsider may not necessarily have an empathetic understanding of the cultural values of the group they study (Merton, 1972). As a researcher who has lived in Ankara for the last 10 years, I had an idea about the social and cultural atmosphere and was aware of the potential political sensibilities of the participants. As an insider, these factors proved to be advantageous in building a rapport with the participants. In addition to this, my general knowledge of Ankara as a Turkish researcher in the field means that it can be presupposed that I hold an insider position in my relationship with Turks and an outsider position in regards to the Kurdish participants. The lack of stability I felt throughout the fieldwork with regard to my position is consistent with the point made by Merton about the situational nature of the insider and outsider positions of the researcher (Merton, 1972: 41): "Differences of religion or age or class or occupation work to divide what similarities of race, sex or nationality work to unite" (Merton, 1972: 23–24). Factors such as age, occupation and class did not affect my position in the field, while those based on the ethnic group to which I belonged and my identity as a woman were certainly influential.

As a Turkish researcher, I assumed initially that my insider status would give me fairly instant access to the Turkish participants, and indeed it was not particularly hard to source Turkish participants due to my networks of Turkish friends and relatives living in Ankara. Although I took no comfort from being a Turkish researcher when recruiting the Turkish participants, I was aware of the inquiries that may have emerged had I been a Kurdish researcher, as people would have been more likely to be suspicious about the intentions of the research. I knew that because of my ethnic identity, Turks would assume that my political stance would be against the Kurdish movement, and that they would therefore accept me without question. It would be fair to say that my ethnic identity and assumed political stance made Turks feel comfortable in agreeing to take part in the research through interviews. In actual fact, my political ideas about the Kurdish Question are critical of the official political perspective.

My insider position was accepted by default due to my ethnic identity, however, if my political perspective was revealed, my position could easily be transformed into that of an outsider. As mentioned above, the fieldwork started with a personal experience in a mini-bus (*dolmus*) involving a confrontation between two women, and what makes this discussion special is the ethnic assault of the Turkish woman against the foreign (Russian) one. The language used by the Turkish woman and the arguments she used to defend herself were a prime example of ethnic humiliation and hate speech. In this situation I tried to stay calm and not to intervene, but the ultimate silence of the other people on the bus annoyed me to the point that I felt compelled to get involved. Because of my support of the foreign woman, all of the anger of the Turkish woman was redirected towards me. She completely forgot about the foreign woman and kept yelling at me. She was extremely angry about my chosen position, and reflected her disappointment and anger at me, repeating the sentence "we are in this position because of people like you", and by "you", she was referring to Turkish people who are not committed to members of their own ethnic group. This situation led me to think about the position of the researcher as a person with a political identity and personal sensitivities as well. Ethnic identity prohibits easy access to participants who are members of the researcher's own ethnic group, as ethnicity and knowledge of cultural codes and gender can be points of conflict, and can end up being challenged through the research.

My insider position in terms of my ethnicity was challenged on occasion and raised suspicion due to the topic of the research. The Kurdish participants in particular found it difficult to understand why a Turkish citizen would be interested in the Kurdish Question, and often asked me directly "Why are you doing this research?" Some of the Turkish participants, such as Ufuk (Kurdish, male, 39), were annoyed with my choice of subject. During the interview, Ufuk said on three occasions: "Studying these issues as a Turkish citizen provokes Kurds. They will justify their attitudes on the strength of your research. We should not do these kinds of things. We have responsibilities in this country. Do not forget it."

Conducting research on the Kurdish Question was seen as an unnecessary and ill-intended action by most of the Turkish respondents, who expressed their ideas on the subject of the research referring to the general argument that it was unnecessary. The general political definition of the Kurdish Question by the Turkish participants, essentially a "denial of the Kurdish Question", emerged as a means of resistance in the process of recruiting participants. While none of the Turks I approached refused to take in part in the research based on the subject matter, most underlined their views, implied a lack of need for research into the Kurdish Question and denied the existence of a conflict between Kurds and Turks in Turkey.

Another issue that made me an insider for one group but an outsider for another was my choice of university for my PhD. Some Turkish respondents perceived my university and PhD programme in a positive light, as a sign of my success in education, and my position as a student also made it easier to recruit some participants. For the rest, it was read suspiciously, as it implied that I had international connections, particularly with European institutions. This stirred people's anxieties about the existence of external enemies, such as in some European countries, the United States and Israel, which support the Kurdish movement. They believed that a PhD student with a scholarship would be vulnerable, and susceptible to manipulation by malevolent external forces who are seeking internal political information about Turkey. The possibility of me passing information about my country to external bodies, in other words, being a spy, was considered not very unlikely. During the interviews a number of participants either implied or stated explicitly that I was being, or could be compelled or deceived to study this issue by my supervisors, who may have harmful and separatist ideas about Turkey. For this reason, I stressed rather my civil-servant position in a Turkish University and the scholarship that I received from Turkish Government to overcome this suspicion. However the same factor made me an insider for Kurdish participants. Being a researcher-student in a university in Europe provided more credibility to the research, and most Kurdish participants stated that they would feel uncomfortable if I was attached to a university in Turkey. This suggested that it would not be possible to conduct objective and independent research on the Kurdish Question in a Turkish

university as a Turkish researcher, as my ideas would be open to manipulation by my supervisor and the evaluation board.

At this point it is necessary to state that while my ethnicity caused some suspicions in the minds of the Kurds, I did not feel like an outsider because of my ethnicity during the phases of recruiting and interviewing the Kurdish participants. While I was aware of the argument that the Kurdish Question cannot be understood and evaluated objectively by a Turkish researcher, I did not experience this argument being made during the fieldwork. Some Kurds were suspicious of my identity, and on a few occasions made inquiries about whether I was a police officer or whether I was working for the state, but this suspicion did not prevent them from participating in an interview.

The times at which I felt most like an outsider were due to my gender and lack of knowledge regarding the gender codes in Kurdish culture. Although there are generally few significant differences between the Kurdish and Turkish cultures, due to the different religious practices between the Kurdish groups and Turks, I had to be attentive during the course of interview. One such example of this was related to the practices of ablution. According to Shaffi belief, touching a woman, whether intentionally or not, makes a man canonically unclean, and so shaking hands was inappropriate behaviour with the Kurdish male participants. As it was not possible to predict the sect to which a male participant belonged, in our first encounter I avoided shaking hands, and waited for them to initiate a greeting.

In addition to encounters with Kurdish male participants, my status as an "outsider" was also evident with both the Turkish and Kurdish female participants. My situation, as a highly educated Turkish woman living in the United Kingdom, was perceived as awkward and "Western". People were curious about my life, my family and my marital status, and wanted to know whether I was living alone in the United Kingdom, or in Ankara, and to learn how I dared to put myself in such situations without the company or support of a father, husband or boyfriend, at the very least.

However, this reaction was rare, and there were no noteworthy differences between the reactions of the Kurdish and Turkish women.

The final point about my positionality in the fieldwork is related to my political stance on the Kurdish Question. As mentioned above, while any suspicion about my leftist and anti-nationalist political affiliation made me an outsider in the Turkish group, in contrast, this factor was the determinant of my insider status among the Kurdish participants. Even those who did not support the Kurdish Movement felt comfortable when they learnt about my political leanings, as they realised that they would not face problems because of their accounts and, more importantly, that their accounts would not be evaluated according to a nationalist perspective. In the words of Chase:

> *"All narrative researchers attend to the research relationship, but those whose studies are based on in-depth interviews aim specifically at transforming the interviewer-interviewee relationship into one of narrator and listener. This involves a shift in understanding the nature of interview questions and answers" (Chase, 2005: 660).*

The shift referred to by Chase led to some initial operational problems while conducting the interviews. For example, trying to encourage participants to speak more about a particular issue so as to specify or generalise the frame of their narrative made them feel like they were in an exam, etc. Most of the participants broke through my structure by offering different stories to conceptualise their own narratives. Although after the pilot phase I felt that these kinds of problems could be easily overcome, I soon realised that it was not possible to impose a particular structure on the narratives and the flow of accounts.

In my fieldwork experience, it was not possible to overcome all of the obstacles between the researcher and participant. In an encounter between two people, as an interviewee and interviewer, who are probably from different backgrounds, have different cultural, financial and educational statuses, and different ages and genders, there will always be some distance. When I started the fieldwork, I felt this distance and wanted to overcome it. However, I learned that even after gaining experience

and improving my interview technique, the distance between the two agents' remained. Despite handling the initial interactions well (a connection is made with the interviewee, s/he agrees to take part in the research, a meeting time and place is arranged), arranging the physical aspects (agreeing to a meeting that is suitable both for the researcher and participant, where both parties feel calm and comfortable and are able to interact) and establishing a good level of rapport with the interviewee, the issue of positionality will still impact upon the kind of data gathered. That simply to say that the gathered data was influenced by a range of factors that were particular to my research subjects, my participants and my identity.

4.8. Ethical Considerations

This research was conducted in a responsible, open and transparent way. All participants and contacts were given an outline of the purposes and goals of the research and were assured of complete anonymity. The procedures adopted by the Research and Ethics Committee of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Edinburgh, were followed, all the collected data was kept in a secure private file, and all the participants were given pseudonyms.

I informed all of the interviewees about the content and the purpose of the research and stressed the confidentiality and anonymity. I did not make an audio recording of the demographic information received from the respondents at the beginning of the interviews, and used the pseudonyms while taking notes during the interviews. In the pilot stage, I presented the participants with a consent form and explained its purpose, however, all participants declined to sign it. One woman expressed concern about signing a document, and added that if this was a requirement, she would refuse to take part in the research, even though she was keen to participate. Reactions to the consent form were similar for both Kurdish and Turkish participants, and seem unrelated to any perceived minority/majority position. According to cultural codes, a signature transforms a document into an official contract that places a burden on the subject, usually in economic affairs, and opting to not sign a document is seen as a security precaution, in a bid to avoid problems in the future. It was especially

difficult for the female participants to sign a consent form. Both single and married women were quite relaxed about making their own decision to take part in the research, signing a document would not have been so easy for them. For these reason, after the pilot phase I did not give the participants a written consent form, accepting that a verbal promise was more culturally appropriate for this research.

To have gain verbal consent, I informed them about the confidential nature of the study, after introducing myself as a student. To most of the participants, being a PhD student would mean little to them, and so to make the research more intelligible I introduced it as a report that I needed to prepare in order to get my degree. I showed my university card as proof of my academic status at the University of Edinburgh and as a member of staff at Hacettepe University, and provided my e-mail addresses and telephone number if they requested contact details. I underlined that the research had no link to any governmental institution, NGO or media company. After explaining the content and purpose of the study, I asked the participants again whether or not they were willing to talk to me. After asking their permission to be interviewed, they did not expect me to ask for permission to record it. One Kurdish man and one Turkish man did not allow me to record their accounts, and asked me not to take their photographs, even though I made no such request. The reason given by these two participants was the same – they did not want an audio recording of their accounts on the Kurdish issue to be made due to security concerns. While they emphasised their trust in me, they were anxious about the possibility that the recordings may change hands against my will and be used against them.

The participants were not approached after the interviews for their views on the interview transcripts or the use of data in the final text, as most did not want further involvement or information about the project. The interviewees who were high school or university students asked me to send them a copy of the completed thesis.

As a Turkish woman researcher in the field, I felt a deep responsibility to the Kurdish participants to protect them from any possible repercussions they may face due to their participation in this research, while most of the time I felt quite vulnerable

during the interviews with the Turkish respondents. I felt in danger of being abused due to my personal political stance on the Kurdish Question, particularly as some Turkish respondents seemed keen to know how I stood on the issue. At some points, when giving their own accounts, they sought my confirmation through such questions as "Don't you think so?", "Am I wrong in thinking…?", or through direct, often threatening, expressions, such as "no Turkish person can think differently". For this reason, I attempted to maintain a distance between myself and participants, such as by kindly refusing the invitation to be friends on Facebook, where I regularly post political messages.

I employed some small strategies in order to ensure the security of both myself and my participants during the fieldwork. Talking quietly when using the words "Kurd", "Kurdish" and "PKK" was an automatic reflex for all of the participants, and even when conducting the interview in a safe place, such as in the home of the respondent, they tended to speak more quietly. I recognised that I too developed this reflex, and became more cautious when using these words in a public place in order to keep both the participant and myself safe, being aware that the subject of discussion may bring reactions from the people around us.

As a result of these precautions during the fieldwork, neither my participants nor I were subjected to any serious security issues; however, I realized that the Kurdish respondents already have their own strategies to keep themselves safe in their daily routines, such as avoiding expressing their political ideas publicly without a contact person and speaking quietly in some public places when discussing this sensitive issue. The only thing that I need to be careful about was my own security in this process.

Hiding my political position was another precaution I made, both to avoid manipulating the narratives of the participants and for security reasons. However, it would not have been possible to disclose my own political perspective when interviewing Dogan (Turkish, male, 40), who insisted that I share my political stance related to the Kurdish Question. His insistence and his threatening tone forced me to

finish the interview. While I did not feel insecure in my position, I perceived his attitude to be a psychological attack against me. As this was one of the pilot interviews, I had not yet understood the importance of concealing my political stance, and after this experience I was careful to avoid revealing my own political stance throughout all the other interviews.

The strategy of defining oneself within a political ideology, which is highly acceptable in mainstream politics in Turkey, is a kind of precaution against possible troubles that one may face in the future after having taken part in an interview with a foreigner who they do not know. After declaring their political identity, especially when this took a nationalist stance, the interviewees often wanted me to approve their position, and also to declare my own, and the precautions that I had established during the interview process evoked threatening reactions from some participants, who were extremely interested in whether I was a nationalist or not. As I was a researcher asking questions about a sensitive issue, they wanted to be assured of their safety, and if I was not one of "them", it could create problems for them, as their narratives could be used against them by separatist groups. Interview in particular, culminated in Berk threatening me in the following way:

> *"If I hear any word of this speech from a Kurd or in a separatist journal or website, I will read it and you can be sure that I will find you. Ok?"(Berk, male, 24)*

After this reaction I managed to keep calm and kept to conduct interview. In order to persuade him to be interviewed I remind the complete anonymity of the research.

4.9. Data Limitations

The data collected in this research was subject to certain limitations. The selected research area, Ankara, may have limited variety in the types of encounters between Kurdish and Turkish individuals. One of the main purposes of this research was to understand the forms of daily encounters between Kurdish and Turkish individuals, and to explore the main motives and themes pertaining to nationalism that appeared in their accounts. I purposefully chose to conduct this research in Ankara in order to

access data on the more ordinary daily encounters, but with an awareness that the resultant data would be different to that collected in another city, where the forms of encounters and narratives would be completely different, such as in Diyarbakır, Mersin, Istanbul or İzmir. In such places, violent and traumatic encounters are more common, but rather than the more radical accounts, I was aiming to access more everyday and relatively "normal" encounters, and to follow the personal narratives of less radically politicised individuals.

Another limitation of this research is the lack of a sect perspective. While the Kurdish participants were mostly Shaffi and the Turks were Sunni, just four interviews were conducted with Alevis. While interviews were conducted with three Alevi Kurds and one Alevi Turk in the piloting process, I tended to avoid interviewing members of such religious minority groups, in that these interviews tended to raise issues that lay outside the scope of the present study. During the interviews with the Alevi Kurds, as a minority in a Sunni-Islamic country, the main subject of discussion was not related with ethnicity. The narratives produced by both the Turk and Kurd Alevis were dominated rather with stories of the state oppression that they had faced due to their religious affiliation since the Ottoman Era. I thus acknowledged that identification ways of Alevis is based on completely different parameters that fall outside the scope of this research.

Another limitation may be attributed my ethnicity and gender, specifically in relation to my encounters with the male and Kurdish participants. While my ethnic identity or gender resulted in no serious issue, an equivalent research conducted by a male researcher may have produced a slightly different type of data. Talking politics with a woman is still an unfamiliar practice in both the Turkish and Kurdish cultures, and the feeling of surprise the individuals felt and the effort they put into adapting to this usual situation may have had an effect on the data I collected. My ethnic identity in the field also brought some limitations to the research. If I was a Kurdish it would be possible to gather more detailed data in the interviews with Kurdish participants; however it would be harder to recruit Turkish respondents into this research. Also, the narratives that Turkish respondents gave would be harsher in both language and

content, and it would not have been possible to witness the self-criticisms, and the criticisms of state policies, that were made during the interviews by the respondents.

4.10. Conclusion

Conducting a research on such a sensitive issue in Turkey with members of the two groups was not easy due to my ethnic identity and challenging political ideas, however the gathered data provided an opportunity to analyse the roots and effects of ethnicity and nationalism in the lives of ordinary Kurds and Turks. The following chapters, in which the gathered data is analysed, shed light on the questions raised during this research, while also raising new questions that still need to be answered.

5. Unchanged Strategy: Denying the Kurdish Question

As stated above, the aim of this research is to understand how ordinary people see the ethnic conflict between Kurds and Turks, how they define the "self" and the "other", and how they define their relationship with the ethnic other within this excessively nationalist-driven political atmosphere. The intention in this chapter is to address the first of these issues by focusing on the founding narrative strategy that frames the personal accounts of ordinary people. The most important narrative strategy employed by the respondents in their accounts was the denial of the existence of a Kurdish ethnic identity and the Kurdish Question. Although this strategy of denial does not provide an understanding of the main arguments put forward by the Kurdish respondents in their accounts, it stands as the founding narrative strategy in all accounts.

The denial of the status of Kurds as an ethnic minority group has been a permanent feature of the official ideology of the Turkish state, dating back even to the pre-establishment of the Republic. The strategy of denial has been practiced by the state through constitutional amendments and policies, such as banning the Kurdish language, and punishing people for speaking Kurdish in public and defining themselves as Kurdish citizens rather than Turkish. The narrative used by political leaders expressing that 'Turkey is only for Turks' supports the idea of Turkey as a country with 'one nation, one state, one flag[33]'. While the roots of the Kurdish Question date back to late Ottoman Era, it was in the 1980s that the issue became a permanent item on the agenda following the establishment of the PKK. With the first armed attack by the PKK in 1984, the issue developed into a systematic conflict between the armed forces of the Turkish state and the PKK. Despite the declared ceasefires and the "Kurdish Expansion[34]" efforts to resolve the issue through political means, the violence continued.

[33] This is a slogan that was voiced by the leaders of both the Justice and Development Party and the Nationalist Movement Party throughout the 2000s, especially during election campaigns.

[34] See Chapter 1.

This thirty-year conflict brought about a transformation in the perceptions of ordinary Kurds and Turks on both the issue and each other. The forced migration policy of the state throughout the 1990s carried the issue to another level, lowering the living standards of Kurds, which were already quite low. The increasing support for the PKK among the Kurdish citizens living in the Kurdish cities and in the west of the country compelled the Turkish State to apply even harsher and more violent policies. These increased the self-awareness of the Kurdish ethnicity of Kurdish society, leading to a rapid growth of the Kurdish movement.

Within this political atmosphere, the mass migration of the 1990s created the opportunity for Kurdish and Turkish people to encounter each other. This was not the first time ordinary Kurds and Turks had met. The two cultures had been living together for years in cities in both the east and west of the country; however this encounter of highly politicised Kurdish and Turkish individuals had a negative impact on the perceptions of both sides about each other. While the newcomers to the cities were perceived as criminal and an uncivilised, the Turks were considered as discriminating and racist by the Kurds.

By this time, many Turks already had a negative view of Kurds, based on their portrayal in the media throughout the 1990s as criminals, backward and separatist. There are also challenging and alternative ways of perceptions in society. With the changes that arose in the meta-narrative concerning the Kurdish Question, the perceptions of ordinary Kurds and Turks about each other created an opportunity to challenge the a strategy of denial. Unsurprisingly, the great power of the official ideology, which was disseminated through the education system and the narratives of the mainstream media, had a significant impact on the ways in which ethnic identity was constructed. Personal encounters also provided a potential for the different ways of ethnic identification. In other words, the encounter of the Turks with the Kurds challenged the idea that Turks, that "there is no Kurd or Kurdish Question in Turkey". After this point, the Kurdish Question could no longer be regarded only as an armed conflict between the Turkish army and the PKK. In the location of the new

encounter, it was not possible to ignore the existence of the Kurds, regardless of whether they supported the Kurdish movement or not.

In short, living together and the macro-political changes made possible to "humanise" the Question in terms of embodiment of the actors. As practicing their ethnic identity, they were forced to refer to their own personal experiences and to "real people" they encountered. All narratives related to the Question and to each other highlighted concrete moments of encounters with an individual. The personal experiences of ordinary Kurds and Turks have become an inseparable component of the process of ethnic identification. In other words, personal encounters were articulated into perceptions of the self and the other, and there appeared a new way of politicising the Question through a humanised perspective. The tendency to "humanize" the conflict and the Kurdish identity emerges as a conflicting and challenging perception in society.

Despite the political transformations over the last decade and the impact of the escalation of potential encounters, the strategy of denial related to the Kurds still prevails, being the common approach on both the Turkish and Kurdish sides. That said, it is not regarded as a simple continuation and reproduction of the meta-narrative of the state. The applied strategies of denial to address the various motivations emerged in the accounts of the participants, making visible the different perceptions of the Question. To address this issue, this chapter examines the narratives related to the denial of Kurds and the Kurdish Question that appear in the accounts of the participants of this research:

(i) How do Kurdish and Turkish people frame the conflict?
(ii) In what ways does the strategy of denial appear in personal accounts?
(iii) How does the strategy of denial function within the whole produced narrative?
(iv) To which historical moments do the participants refer?
(v) Through which narrative strategies are these accounts structured?

5.1. A Dilemma: Denial of the Kurds or of the Kurdish Question?

Before introducing the forms of denial, it is necessary to state a shared point that emerged within the narratives of the participants related to this political issue. When the Turkish and Kurdish participants spoke about the conflict, they draw inevitably from the wide spectrum of general political arguments. The introductory parts of the interviews were structured according to the general accounts of the participants of the conflict, with no reference made to any personal experiences. Summaries and superficial evaluations of the Question made the first part of the interviews more superficial than the other parts, which were based on personal experiences and called for detailed evaluations. General political speeches function as a framing tool, from which the personal political ideas of each respondent can be understood through their evoking of dominant political clichés, slogans and popular references to the issue. The denial of the Kurds and the Kurdish Question emerged as an argument in this initial part of the accounts, in which general political ideas were put forward in daily language.

The strategy of denial emerges as a point of departure in the accounts of the Kurdish and Turkish participants, and is presented in a two-layered form. While it functions as a means of framing the issue within the borders of the meta-narrative, it also serves as a starting point for criticisms of the official policy of the state. In other words, the denial of the Kurdish Question as a narrative strategy is framed by two main arguments when discussing such topics as the originality of the Kurdish language and the ownership of territory, referring to Anatolia:

(i) Denial of the existence of Kurds as a distinct ethnic group and denial the Kurdish language
(ii) Denial of the existence of the Kurdish Question

5.1.1. There are no Kurds, no Kurdish Question

5.1.1.1. Kurdish: Genuine or Fake

Denial of the Kurdish language has been one of the components of the meta-narrative concerning the denial of the Kurds, and has taken the form of a ban on the speaking of the Kurdish language in public. As a component of the meta-narrative, the denial of the Kurdish language emerges as a supporting narrative strategy that legitimises the narrative of denial of the Kurds. Umut, a Turkish participant, presents a pertinent example of the narrative strategy of denial in his account. As a postgraduate student who holds a high position in a government ministry, it was striking to hear these old arguments, as representative of the official discourse, from him. Umut has a master degree in history, focusing on the pre-Ottoman history of the Turks, but his scientific/academic interests did not prevent him from holding biased views. He argued that:

> *"I don't want to say something wrong. I support their endeavours to gain their educational rights, but I do not think they [Kurds] even have a proper alphabet yet. Yes maybe there is a language called Kurdish, but it is so disconnected. There are different dialects in Kurdish. Kurds do not understand the other dialects of this language. Or when you transform the language into written form, there appear funny things. They use the letter 'X' to voice the 'H'. When you say 'X', does it sound like 'H'? (laughing) I really wonder. When one is speaking it does not sound like that. Of course I am not sure but I believe that it is a kind of fake language." (Umut, Turkish, male, 28)*

According to Umut, the Kurdish language does not exist, and rather than simply denying the existence of the Kurdish, he discredits their originality. This supports the general argument that there is no naturally-occurring Kurdish nation. It is just fabricated. Likewise, there is no Kurdish language, as it has also been fabricated since their nationalist revival. While it is possible to follow the transformation of general thinking related to the Kurdish Question through the participants' accounts, the idea of the "artificiality" of the Kurdish identity and the Kurdish Question remains alive in people's minds. As discussed in primordialist perspective in nationalism theories, navels and originality of the ethnicities emerges as the most

prominent factor in naming the Kurds as distinct ethnic group. However the thing is ignored at this point is all the nations are to some extent fabricated (Gellner, 2008).

The Kurdish participants, especially those who define themselves as Kurdish rather than Turkish, are aware of the narrative strategy of denial that is embedded in the collective memory of Turks. The addressee of the accounts of the Kurdish participants is not ordinary "Turks", but the Turkish state, in that they know full well that they are not recognised as a national entity within the hegemonic ideology of the state. This is evident in the account of Nazim, a Kurdish shopkeeper working in various marketplaces in Ankara who defines himself as a "political Kurdish citizen" who "devotes himself to the resolution of the Kurdish Question". He states that:

> *"Everyone should know that we will keep resisting at any cost. I don't need to mention the Turks, in that they do not believe in the existence of a nation called Kurdistan. All they do is deny us. In this respect, how can it be possible to give rights to an unrecognised group? So many people believe that I fabricated the language I speak. Let's say I fabricated it! Do 25 million Kurdish-speaking people speak in eggy peggy?" (Nazim, Kurdish, male, 36)*

5.1.1.2. Who came first?

In response to the tendency to supress the Kurds by discrediting the Kurdish language, Kurdish participants raised the argument that an ethnic group exists called Kurds. Proving the existence of the Kurds in Anatolia even before the Turks was a striking point that emerged in the interviews.

> *"Turkish people do not know where they came from originally. They don't know anything about Turkishness. They just read their history and rely on the argument that Turks came from Mesopotamia, which was already a part of the Ottoman territory. They don't know where they come from. As far as I am concerned there was no Turkish entity in the Ottoman territory. Was there? We were already here [in this territory] by the time the Turks [arrived]." (Omer, Kurdish, male, 35)*

> *"I ask my mum 'are you Kurdish and where did you come from?' You know, Turks say that this land is theirs, so I just want to check this argument. My mum says 'My son, my father was telling me that we*

> *came from Mesopotamia. Initially we lived in those lands and then we came here [Anatolia]. We were here before the Battle of Manzikert [1071] – the Turks did not win that war, we won it'. I actually know that they did not win. We won that war." (Cevat, Kurdish, male, 34)*

The counter-narrative of the Kurds against the denial strategy challenges the Turkish nationalist discourse and functions as a cross-check for the argument that nationalism creates its own counter-nationalisms. The age-old myth that the Turks came from Asia Minor through Anatolia and fought for the land is a part of the official history of the Turkish state. A nationalist language is employed by both the Turkish and Kurdish group members when stating the legitimacy of their argument that they are 'the landlord of the Anatolian territory'. Instead of challenging assertions of 'ownership', there appears a Kurdish nationalist language that echoes the arguments of Turkish nationalism. The idea that a group can claim ownership of a territory by being the first to arrive there is a pure nationalist argument which refers to discussions on settler nationalism. Encounters of indigenous and settler groups appears as prominent part of nationalist discourse. This argument is repeated by the Kurdish participants during the interviews. They claim that Kurds were already settled in Asia Minor when the Turks arrive. According to some Kurdish participants Turks see "the land as an empty space waiting to be filled" (Maron, 2002: 1016). However in this case answer of the question of who are the settlers and who are the indigenous is ambivalent.

The denial of the Kurdish Question emerged as an approved argument for Kurds as well, which functions as a strategy that allows them to situate themselves in a secure area by assuming an apolitical identity. Those Kurdish participants who denied the existence of the Kurdish Question tended to underline that not all Kurds are terrorist. As stated by Onur: "As a Kurdish citizen, I do not believe that there is a Kurdish Question. Only some of the Kurds are related with this issue." (Onur, Kurdish, male, 55)

Bearing witness to influential assimilation policies applied for some eighty years towards all minorities by the Turkish state, most of the Kurds involved in this research make no commitment to their ethnic identity, and tended to underscore the

lack of a Kurdish Question. As can be observed through their accounts, some Kurds define themselves as ethnically Kurdish, although most underline their commitment to their Turkish identity, as demanded by official discourse.

5.1.2. Denial through Threats

While the strategy of denial stands out as an obvious factor, in some interviews, modified forms of structures were employed by through different narrative strategies, such as "denying through threats". Although exceptional, some Kurdish participants denied the existence of the Kurdish Question, but referred to it when making a warning. As Nazım stated:

> *"There is no Kurdish Question between the two groups in everyday life, but if there was, they [Turks] would not live in such a peaceful environment" (Nazim, Kurdish, Male, 36).*

One Turkish nationalist participant, Mehmet, who had been active in the nationalist movement since the 1990s and now defined himself as 'an ordinary citizen without any political engagement', emphasised that there was no problem between two groups:

> *"If there was, I would never accept the Kurdish soldiers in my shop. I would never serve them in this shop. If we (Turks) had problems with them they would not live as safely as they do now. We would behave like them and kill Kurds living here, Istanbul and Izmir" (Mehmet, Turkish, male, 32).*

While Mehmet was giving this account a customer was in the shop who from his physical appearance, could be understood to be Kurdish. I asked him whether he was Kurdish as I felt very bad on his behalf to have heard Mehmet making such open threats against the Kurds. I noted that Mehmet showed no sign of shame or regret as a result of this encounter. In contrast, he said; "You see. If there was a problem I would not let him come and sit with us". The customer agreed with this but was

annoyed after his ethic identity was declared, and five minutes later he left. After he had gone, the participant said;

> *"I knew he was Kurdish. That is why I talked in that aggressive tone. We need to act this way towards them; otherwise they will abuse our humanity and kindness" (Mehmet, Turkish, male, 32).*

Mehmet was quite firm in his political ideas, which were based on the idea that Turkey belongs to the Turks, as he stated at the end of the interview. It was a striking encounter for me to see the interaction between these two people and to observe the differences between them when they were together and after the Kurdish man had left. This encounter can be seen as a concretisation of the denial at an inter-personal level. Mehmet knew that his customer was Kurdish, and while did not refer to him specifically in his account, he wanted to give a message to him. In other words, his account had a subject at that moment, and he did not miss out on the chance to demonstrate his power as a Turkish nationalist.

In contrast Mehmet's customer who left the shop, Guliz did not react when she encountered such a concrete and inter-personal level of denial. Guliz's family had been forced to migrate in the 1990s moving to Ankara before she was born. She was aware of the conflict through the stories of her family. As a quite politicised Kurdish individual, but prefers to challenge the narrative strategy of denial through her everyday life.

> *"I have so much trouble about this issue in school. We have so many arguments, but I can say that I have changed completely the perceptions of the whole class. They cannot mention this issue when I am in the group. I have a refractory personality. The first time I argued with my teacher I was when I was in the second class in high school. Everyone was shocked due to my reaction to the teacher. The teacher said that there was no Kurdish problem, so it does not require a solution. I could not control myself, I was so angry. I had seen something that made me so sad the day before about Kurdish children who could not go to school due to poverty. It is a problem for me that I can go to school in the west while they cannot. I just said this. After this day he [the teacher] started to take an interest in me specifically. He increased my grades in the lessons to gain my trust and attention back, as far as he explained. His main aim is discourage me from my*

political views about the Kurdish Question." (Guliz, Kurdish, female, 17)

5.2. Arguments of Denial

As can be seen, the strategy of denial did not emerge as a single layered argument throughout the interviews. As a narrative strategy, denial is accompanied by different expressions to achieve the legitimisation of the basic argument, such as: "there is no reason for conflict between the Kurds and the Turks" and the Kurdish Question is therefore "a fake clash, fabricated by invisible or external forces".

5.2.1. There is no Reason for Conflict between Kurds and Turks

Both Kurdish and Turkish participants put forward several arguments to support the idea that no conflict exists between the two groups. While the participants denied the Kurdish Question, they were aware of the need to bring to an end the animosity between the two groups by emphasising in particular the common history of the two. The narrative of denial gained legitimacy through the official narrative of the "Independence War", which stated that "while all other ethnic and religious minorities accompanied the European forces, the Kurds stayed and fought together with the 'Turks' against the occupying forces. Victory was attained due to the cooperation of these two nations –the Turks and Kurds. This victory was a respectful and sacred moment in Turkish history, and these two ethnic groups were the most important components of the cooperation. This historical commonality was brought up by Gulsum in her account:

> *"There is no Kurdish Question. We fought together during the War of Independence* with Kurdish people. They did not take part in the Battle of Gallipoli, as they were fighting in the Tripoli War at the same time. Finally, there were no technological facilities in those old times. That is why Kurds had to fight on the fronts of the war close to their region. Some of them say that there are not so many Kurdish martyrs in the cemeteries of Canakkale, but while Turkish people from the west were fighting on the front at Gallipoli, Kurdish people were fighting on the eastern front." (Gulsum, Turkish, female, 49)

On the other hand, this narrative of commonality was sometimes a matter of annoyance for the Kurds, who believe that it is a superficial account that serves to cloud the issue and create a fake sense of equality. The Kurdish participants are aware that their ancestors fought together with the other people living in Anatolia, but still did not have their rights respected. Unlike the other minorities, such as the Greeks, Armenians etc., who made up the population of Anatolia, they did not deny their ethnicity in order to be part of the nation-state project as so-called Turks. Within the new nation, all groups were required to define themselves as Turkish, even if they belonged to a different ethnic group, with the aim being to erase differences of language and culture. The claim that "Those [ethnic and religious minorities] who agreed to assimilate into the Turkish culture were always welcomed" (Kaya, 2012: 150) is still an argument operated and practiced at both official and unofficial levels in Turkey.

> *"Let's go to the martyr's cemetery in Canakkale now. You cannot find the graves of any Laz people because they did not fight in the Gallipoli war, although they behave more nationalist than the Turks do. While they [Turks,Lazs etc.] avoid fighting for this land, Kurds fought there." (Nazim, Kurdish, male, 36)*

Another prominent theme in the interviews, used to legitimatise the argument that no conflict exists between Turks and Kurds, accentuated the lack of inequality in society. This theme appeared when participants asserted that the political demands of the Kurds were unnecessary, in that they already have cultural and political rights. Economic, cultural and educational inequalities have been essential elements in the evaluation of the Kurdish Question from the time of the first emergence of the issue within the state narrative. Overcoming inequality and increasing economic and social investments in the Kurdish territory have long been seen as the only solutions to the problem. Framing the issue as one that is based merely on economics has not helped the state in achieving a permanent solution. As the problem has been seen primarily as one of economic inequality by the administrative cadre of the state, speaking of cultural and political rights has been deemed unnecessary. Everyone living in Turkey has a Turkish identity card and is therefore accepted as equal in official terms. In other words, as Kurds are recognised as nationals of the Turkish state, it is not

possible to assert that Turks occupy a privileged position. While some of the Kurdish and Turkish participants take the perspective that Kurds experience inequality by default, for most of them this is a simple argument to be refuted.

> *"They (Kurds) have equal rights to us. Is there any barrier to them becoming civil servants, teachers, doctors or deputies? There are many Kurdish deputies in Parliament in all parties, and the richest businessmen in this country are Kurdish. Some have even become president of this country. At these times there was no problem. Why did it emerge so suddenly? Because they ask for more in all sectors, both money and power. They want to be the only authority in the places where they are settled. They are accustomed to being fed by the state. They do not pay any electricity or water bills. They do not want to work, but all of them have at least fifteen children. Neither the state nor the other citizens of this country have to the feed them." (Adem, Turkish, male, 42)*

As stated above, so long as a Kurd does not challenge their Turkish identity or express a problem with their sense of belonging to a Turkish society, they tend not to be exposed to any discriminatory treatment in everyday life. This principle operates in the same way in the workplace. As long as they define themselves as Turkish and do not highlight their Kurdishness or their dissimilarity, Kurds may climb to the highest levels in their careers. This argument has always been based on the case of Turgut Ozal, who, although he never stated specifically that he was Kurdish, it was claimed that he was. He became the eighth president of the country and served for six years. The existence of Kurdish judges, advocates, doctors, teachers, academic staff and even parliamentary deputies is held up as proof of the equalities; however, the counter-argument of the Kurdish participants offers a quite different perspective on the issue. As Omer stated,

> *"In Turkey, we [Kurds] can be anything: teachers, soldiers, judges, engineers, deputies, prime ministers, even presidents. We do not have to be only Kurdish. Despite being Kurdish, anything is possible for us." (Omer, Kurdish, male, 35)*

5.2.2. A Fabricated Clash

The logical sequence of the accounts of the participants is determined by their need to legitimise the ideas expressed. A common theme employed to support denial of the Kurdish Question is that the whole issue is fabricated. The Kurdish Question is often considered to be a fake issue that does not stem from real and fair motives, but something that is fabricated by people who want to undermine Turkey. While in the second level of this argument, various parties are declared as responsible, in this level the tendency is to accentuate the fabricated feature of the Kurdish Question.

According to Gulsum, a responsible figure, such as an 'invisible hand' that plans and perpetuates the conflict, is defined. Such a perception of the Kurdish Question serves to alienate the issue in the minds of individuals, and diverts focus to external targets within their political accounts. When I asked Gulsum about her the ideas on the Kurdish Issue, she said:

> *"When we were young, there was no indication of the Kurdish issue or the Kurdish identity on television. Why did it emerge so suddenly? I mean, why is it mentioned in all of the news and discussion programmes? Someone wants to create this problem, for no reason at all." (Gulsum, Turkish, female, 49)*

The emergence of the conflict between the Turkish army and PKK remains the dark side of the issue, which has not yet been understood in the minds of the Turkish participants. While they recognise the conflict between the state and the PKK, they resist accepting the existence of a conflict between ordinary Kurds and Turks. In other words, the Turkish participants tend to see the Question rather as an armed conflict between the PKK and the state, and as something that is totally unrelated with ordinary Kurds and Turks. In this sense, the Kurdish movement is equated to the PKK and its use of terrorism.

Being aware of the Question but discrediting its importance was a common strategy within the accounts. The inconvenience of the imputed importance of the issue appeared as a different form of argument for the artificiality of the issue. Those that

do not understand the real roots of the problem make comparisons with the situation of other minorities living in Turkey, and in doing so, arrive at another question: Why do issues concerning these minorities seem so important? As Nihan said,

> *"It was not an important element of the agenda until the 1990s. Recently, the Kurdish Question has become a means of covering up the real problem of this country. Instead of the Armenian problems, the problems of the Kurds and Alevi are discussed in the media." (Nihan, Turkish, female, 43)*

The rationale articulated by Nihan, that "if nobody talks about it, there won't be any problem", is a fairly common way of evaluating the issue. According to this logic, public discussions of the Kurdish Question is completely unnecessary, and even a malevolent act, that needlessly produces and reproduces discomfort between the two groups.

The strategy of denial fulfils a controlling function in preventing a possible internal war in the accounts of both the both Kurds and Turks. In other words, acceptance of the Kurdish Question may be an act of provocation, and may lead to uncontrollable conflict. While on the Turkish side the narrative of denial operates as a kind of "tolerance" for the continued presence of Kurds in the country, on the Kurdish side this narrative strategy functions as a defensive strategy, presenting themselves as individuals who follow the official ideology. Ufuk, the owner of a hair salon in a quite wealthy district of Ankara, expressed his annoyance about giving voice to the Kurdish Question in the following way:

> *"Someone wants to present it as a real problem by provoking and scratching it. It is just fabricated by someone. It always annoys me to talk about it. It is a way of creating the problem. It may be worse in time. You may even fuel the fire by conducting research into this issue. Would you consider conducting the same study fifteen years ago? No. It is fabricated. People are made to believe that. Like you. Even it is a sign that this issue is being taken seriously, it is a way of agitating the Kurds." (Ufuk, Turkish, male, 39)*

Although Ufuk has known me for ten years, he was annoyed at being part of a research project on the Kurdish Question, as he did not believe the topic to be worthy of discussion or research, maintaining an attitude of denial.

Younger participants tended to explain the issue as being related to the hidden agenda of external enemies, which is coherent with the hegemonic discourse. Middle-aged and older participants, on the other hand, sought to explain the way in which the issue emerged with reference to the social clashes that occurred before the raising of the Kurdish Question. The traumas of the military coup of 12 September 1980 have not been forgotten, and the emergence of the Kurdish Question made it hard to understand another conflict based on ethnic distinction. While five or six years ago the social conflict based on left and right ideologies, from the mid-1980s onwards a different form of social discord was experienced. Inasmuch as the confrontation of the left-right political groups was still alive in the collective memory, comparisons are made with reference to the experiences of the coup, which made no sense for them:

> *"I was twelve when I came to Ankara, and I did not hear the word 'Kurd' before the 1990s. Even if we heard it, we could not make sense of it. Before the PKK, I had no experience with anything related to the Kurds around me. We did not know the difference between Kurds and Turks. It was said that people from Erzurum were Kurdish or people from Haymana were Kurdish. But that is all ... There was a right-left conflict before the 1980s, and while I never approved of the coup, it did stop the deaths. Every day several young people died in the clashes. It was ridiculous. But at that time the troubles were spread across the whole country. The fighting between the Kurds and Turks was contained in a small area. My generation is aware of the danger of the social clashes, but I do not think that the Kurdish issue is a real clash like the left-right conflict." (Adil, Turkish, male, 51)*

5.2.3. Conspiracy Theories: Allocating Responsibility to External Forces

The meta-narrative of Turkish nationalism is also linked easily to conspiracy theories. In the participants' accounts, references were made to Sevres Syndrome,

referring anxiety. Respondents, when seeking someone to blame, would often identify external enemies. Besides the potential internal threats, the paranoia of unity is also employed to produce conspiracy theories about 'external enemies', who have retained their separatist intentions since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. This narrative has always operated and has an irreplaceable role in both the state and public discourse since the Ottoman era. All of the conspiracy theories featured the participants' accounts referred to the Ottoman Empire. Blaming the United States and other imperialist countries for Turkey's internal problems was a common part of the political accounts of most of the participants. This conspiracy culture is a prominent element in popular culture in Turkey, where film, television series and everyday conservations commonly refer external forces playing a malevolent role in internal politics in Turkey. Unsurprisingly, under the impact of this trend, seeking an external party responsible for the Kurdish issue emerges alongside denial as an articulating strategy. This 'paranoia' triggers the need to be ready for attacks, whether internal or external, that may threaten the unity of the country. It is a social reflex to conceptualise issues in different arenas, such as international affairs, security, relations with neighbouring countries.

> *"The Ottoman Empire collapsed because of our external enemies; but the new strategy when attacking a country is not like it was in times past. Now those big countries provoke the minorities in the country to break up the Empire. There are hundreds of secret agents of the United States and Israel in Turkey even today. It is obvious that they want to provoke someone to damage the unity of this country." (Mehmet, Male, Turkish, 32)*

Proving the role of external forces as the directors of the story creates a new narrative form that makes it easier to articulate the meta-narrative that "There is no Kurdish Question in Turkey. This is a problem of terrorism".

5.2.4. There is no Kurdish Question; This is Terrorism

Although the policies and projects of the current government reflect an attempt to resolve the problem of the Kurdish Question, the basic narrative used in these

policies is no different to that of previous governments. It is still attested that the problem with the 'Kurdish problem' does not relate to ordinary Kurds. This idea repeated by the then Prime Minister Erdogan framed the policies of the government towards the Kurdish Question.

Such assertions are based on a denial of the popularisation and massification of the Kurdish movement in Kurdish society, leading to the cultural and political demands of the Kurdish Question becoming invisible. By underlining religious and historical commonalities between the two groups, the issue is both covered and denied. Defining the Kurdish Question as a terror problem functions to radicalise the ideas and practices with regards the ordinary Kurds. The recent political narrative has been created and recreated by journalists and political leaders, but ignores the everyday experiences of ordinary people.

> *"There is no Kurdish question; there is a terrorism problem that is not related to Kurds. We (Turks) do not see people in terms of ethnicity. The important criterion is the ideology by which they define themselves and what they are like as people. If we did same as the Kurds, it would not be possible for Kurds to live in Ankara, Istanbul." (Ozlem, Turkish, female, 20).*

According to the argument above, conflict between the PKK and the Turkish state should not be referred to as the Kurdish Question, as it is actually a terrorism issue. While this statement has gained support in the speeches of the administrative cadres of the government, it has also been widely stated in the speeches of the other nationalist political leaders. By referring to this statement it becomes possible to reduce the Question to terrorism, and the people who support the movement into terrorists, and to regard the cultural and political demands as illegitimate. In other words, this definition and understanding of the Question as terrorism in the minds of the public refers to the PKK and the sympathisers of the movement. Through this definition, the everyday aspect of the Question is completely ignored, thus reducing it to a security problem of the state.

While in the accounts of the Turkish participants the Kurdish Question is completely denied through various narrative strategies, the Kurdish participants tend to stress the

existence of the conflict by referring to their own personal experiences. The lack of negative experiences in their daily encounters compels the Turkish participants to use a strategy of denial based on the one-dimensional perception that accepting the issue as a political question that does not reverberate in daily life at all. The daily aspect of the issue is regarded completely free from politics and political institutions such government, Parliament and the military. This categorical perception is based on the imagination of a private sphere free of politics and completely isolated from the effects of the public sphere. Asli, a young educated Turkish woman, defines herself as completely 'apolitical', but defines the Kurdish Question as an issue that is completely political, and that is organised and steered by politicians. She bypasses the role of politics in the issue by referring to her personal experiences, and sees the personal/private living space as one that is free from politics:

> *"I have Kurdish friends, but I never observed any negative attitude from them. On the contrary, they were always more close to us. Look! In my childhood we employed Kurdish labourers to gather hazelnuts in our gardens. We were always so close with them. They always brought gifts to us. Both my mother and my father were always quite helpful and kind towards them. I even tried to learn a few words of Kurdish with my brother during the summer. I never thought that they were bad, separatist or racist. We had never experienced any attempt to manipulate us. I mean, as I said before, I never experienced bad things with them. I always saw their good sides." (Asli, female, Turkish, 24)*

5.3. Counter-Narratives: Challenging Denial

The discussion put forward by Molly Andrews on the power of the counter narrative contributes to the argument of this research: 'while superficially the narratives presented here may seem to fit within this master narrative, a closer reading of them reveals a more complex picture' (Bamberg, Andrews, 2004: 9). It is possible to say that themes create its own counter-themes in course of the practice of talking politics. As Gamson states;

> *"Themes are safe, conventional, and normative; one can invoke them as pieties on ceremonial occasions with the assumption of general social approval, albeit some private cynicism. Counter themes typically share many of the same taken for granted assumptions but*

> *challenge some specific aspects of the mainstream culture; they are adversarial, contentious, oppositional" (Gamson, 1992: 135).*

As with the accounts of the Kurdish participants, there appeared some exceptional narratives also in those of the Turkish participants. It is not hard to recognise the emergence of a counter-narrative against the official accounts. The political transformations made by the recent government need to be explained to allow an understanding of the emergence of the counter forms of narratives that changed the public perception of the army and other Kemalist institutions by discrediting them. As mentioned in the contextual chapter, the main 'other' for the current government is the 'Kemalists' rather than the Kurds. While the 'conservative-democratic' government has designated the Kemalists as its 'anti' camp, the Kurds are seen as Muslim brothers with whom it may be possible to reach an agreement. The clash between the Kemalist and Islamist camps in Turkey has provided the opportunity for people to criticise the Kemalist ideology and its exclusionary attitudes. While it was not possible to criticise any idea related to Kemalism in the past, now arguments against Kemalist nationalism and its practices related to the Kurdish Question have emerged. As one female Turkish participant stated:

> *"At the beginning of the relationship the Kurds had no feelings of inequality, but then after that they began to think that they were being discriminated against by Turks. I think they are right. Even the lecturers exclude them from university. People should not blame the Kurds. Before accusing them, they should look at themselves. If the professors exclude them, what can these people do? They can only go to another place where they will be accepted. There are some types in the university who follow these kinds of Kurdish children trick them into joining illegal Kurdish organisations, and their traps work very well. Frankly, I would tend to join these groups if I was discriminated against like these people are. I would not think about whether it is right or wrong. They are so young and inexperienced about life." (Canan, Turkish, female, 21)*

While macro political transformations affect the perceptions of ordinary people, giving them an awareness of the discriminatory policies employed until today against the Kurds, the most important arena in which discrimination occurs is in the concrete personal encounters that people face in their daily lives. As Canan stated in her account, while she had only superficial knowledge about and interest in the Kurdish

Question, through her own experiences she had gained another perspective for her evaluation of the issue. From the narratives of the participants it can be concluded that personal experiences are quite effective in reconstructing people's perceptions and transforming their political ideas and the ways of practising their own identities.

Given the room for manoeuvre provided by the transformed policies of the Turkish state related to the Kurdish Question over the last decade it has also become possible to criticise the army in terms of its policies. People have started talking about their own experiences and sharing their real ideas about the war and the situation of the people who live in eastern Turkey. Omer, a Kurdish nationalist and a volunteer for the Kurdish party of Peace and Democracy, states:

> *"Just think for a moment; two people from each family are killed. There are too many examples like this. This issue cut people to the quick. It is inconvenient for a person whose family you have killed to remain calm in front of you. Just imagine! They have very strong and close connections within their own community and they have a blood connection. If I experienced something like this, I mean, if my father, brother or son were killed, it would be the first thing I would feel. If you harm my family, why should do nothing? People living in the region feel that way I think. One of my friends told me a story. He did his military service in the eastern part of the country. He was saying 'we went to the villages for an investigation at around 3–4 am while the sun was rising. We did not wait for the morning. I mean we swooped down. We did not wait for people to open their doors; we broke them down and entered the houses. We were throwing out the women in their underwear.' If anyone entered my house in this way, not only soldiers, whoever it was, I would blow their brains out. Just imagine, while you were sleeping with your wife and your children, your door was broken down and your wife and your daughter were thrown out in this way." (Omer, Kurdish, male, 35)*

The personal experiences and stories heard from their friends provide legitimacy for their Kurdish nationalist standpoint. The concept of empathy has become a part of the daily political speech of ordinary people related to the Kurdish Question as an inference of the humanisation of the Question. The shared experiences of ordinary Kurds have resulted in feelings of empathy and expectations of empathy within Turkish society. Empathy provides people to transcend their personal experience and to try to feel how they would be in another situation (Gamson, 1992: 133). Attempts

to empathise with the Kurdish people living in the eastern region of Turkey appeared as a narrative figure in the accounts. The policies of the state and the army were discussed in detail, and both Kurds and Turks started to evaluate the issue from a different perspective. The changing media discourse related to the Kurdish Question served as a resource for the respondents, which they employed to develop a counter-narrative. As Gamson states, people use media discourse in various ways to support the frame of their accounts (1992: 120). References to specific 'spotlighted' facts, such as "Kurds have been discriminated against throughout history", and cases, such as "Diyarbakır Prison", are examples of the use of the media discourse in the accounts. People tended to avoid checking the accuracy of these kinds of spotlighted facts. Adil, a 51 year old trader who defines himself as a Kemalist nationalist and leftist, highlighted the points that he thought should be brought to the table for discussion:

> *"Our state is not as pure as the driving snow, you know. They tortured the people living there [in the eastern part of Turkey]. These people were tortured and exiled, forced to emigrate. They separated the boy from the dad, the girl from the mum. They made them unemployed. What could these people do? They went up into the mountains as a final remedy. You know about the brutality in Diyarbakir Jail in the period of the coup. A lot of people were hanged for nothing. They hanged 17–18 year old boys, and they did this to stop the bloodshed, allegedly. They just created hostility and anger; and the result was a new generation that has been brought up in this atmosphere. They have grown up as enemies of the Turkish state." (Adil, Turkish, male, 51)*

Members of majority groups tend to use a "get passive" approach, such as: "These people were tortured and exiled, forced to emigrate". Wortham *et al.* state that "get-passive is generally used to report adversative or problematic events, and construction focuses on the consequences for the patient or the grammatical subject of the construction" (Wortham et al., 2011: 65). In other words, by opting for the passive construction, respondents present the minority groups as victims with whom we, the audience, can build an emotional connection (2011: 66).

Recent political shifts related to the Kurdish Question have permitted people on both the Kurdish and Turkish sides to make criticisms of the army and its policies over the

last thirty years in the eastern part of Turkey. While such accounts were being made before the political change, doing so would be considered a crime against the Turkish army, based on ensuring the unity of the state. Such accounts, giving voice to critics of the army, can be also criticised in terms of their conformist nature in supporting state narratives, but still have the potential to criticise bellicist and military narratives.

> *"Actually, the basic demand is obvious: neither a separate state nor a flag. Nobody besides a couple of people is demanding this, and this is the starting point of the PKK as well. These men just want their rights. Just as you [Turkish people] have your rights here, they want their own hospitals and schools. They just want to have their interests met, just like the other people living on the same land." (Levent, Turkish, male, 36)*

5.4. Conclusion

In this chapter the continuity and ruptures between the official narrative on the denial of Kurds and the personal accounts of the participants are discussed. Denial, the founding narrative strategy, can be found at the centre of all accounts. The first part of the interviews was devoted to developing an account based on the narratives of denial, in particular raising challenges against it. The respondents preferred to make a general speech on the ethnic conflict based mostly on the conversational resources of media discourse and popular wisdom. After defining the borders of the issue through a general political discussion, they started to consider its micro aspects, and situated personal experience within this frame. Seeing ways of the "self" and the "other", and expressing ways of personal experiences are constructed by the vocabulary that narrative of denial gives. All the meanings are created under the roof of denial.

While the existence of the denial as a narrative strategy in the personal accounts stands as a highly powerful theme, the existence of criticisms and counter narratives shows how the meta-narrative has become a challenging issue. It can be said that macro political transformations have changed the perceptions of the Kurdish Question and made it possible to challenge the policies of the state, facilitating

discussion on the issue. Besides this paradigmatic change in macro politics, the increasing potential for personal encounters has affected the perception and acts of denial. Experiencing these encounters with each other in everyday life has created a new means of politicising the Question that is based on its human aspect. From this perspective, personal experiences have gained more importance in both people's perceptions of the Question and in each other. The dissemination of stories of personal experiences has created the possibility of empathy for the members of each group. In other words, in Turkish society in particular, some anticipation concretising in the statement "if I were he/she..." has become possible. In this way, the violent policies of the state and the bitter experiences of the Kurds have begun to be evaluated from a more human perspective. Despite the appearance of new possibilities to challenge the narrative of denial, the issue still holds a crucial place in the accounts of the participants. The strategy of denial functioned in two ways:

(i) Denial of the Kurds and Kurdish language without any effort to challenge the meta-narrative, and
(ii) Recognising the Kurds but denying the Kurdish Question through arguments aimed at legitimising the denial, such as: (a) Stating a lack of reason behind the conflict, (b) defining the Question as a fabricated one, (c) assigning some external agency as responsible for triggering the Question in (d) conspiracy theories.

However, the existence of counter narratives opens up the possibility of framing the Question in a different way. As it stated above, the strategy of denial functions as a starting point in accounts concerning the Question, after which, the participants tended to legitimise their main arguments based on the narrative of denial, and in order to do this, they gave more detailed information about themselves and the 'other'. Defining the 'self' and the 'other' in this way appeared as a secondary narrative strategy that was employed by the participants in their accounts.

6. Self and Other: Narratives of the Turks and Kurds about Each Other

All stories comprise plot line, timeline, space and actors, but the most important feature of a story is how these various components interconnect. Stories usually begin by introducing the main actors before moving on to the main plot. If one narrates a personal experience as a story, it becomes crucial to position the 'self' and introduce the actors that one is going to talk about. As Riessman says:

> *"When we tell stories about our lives we perform our identities. Identities are constituted through such performative actions, within the context of the interview itself as a performance" (2003: 337,340).*

To understand the accounts and identities of the people we research, it is necessary to take into account not only their cultural and ethnic origins, but also the political context in which they reside and the social, cultural and political formation to which they belong. Interviews provide opportunities for participants to recreate, transform, negotiate, challenge and deny identities through their individual accounts. Interviews also should be seen as an on-going process of negotiation, aiming to produce a though immanently failing subject/identity position. As Cirakman states, the answer to the question:

> *"…'who we are?' is designated by the story of foundation, origins and ethos for collectivity, whereas self-image is about how a society reflects on its identity in the presence of the others or in public" (2011: 1894).*

On a number of occasions in this research, the respondents made self-definitions and definitions of others. In making definitions and giving details about themselves and others in an effort to provide legitimacy to their narratives, the participants employed particular narrative strategies. For the participants who were not accustomed to engaging in political conversations, the most important motivation to continue talking was the desire to provide as much legitimacy to their accounts as possible. They did this through providing examples, recounting personal stories, making

comparisons and listing observations. In this research, the telling of narratives was an important means through which self-definitions could be made and definitions could be made of others. The interview questions were not designed to prompt the participants to make either self-definitions or definitions of others, as this act emerged rather as a means of constructing individual narratives and was undertaken spontaneously by participants.

This chapter outlines the forms of and motivations for making self-definitions and definitions of others, and is divided into two main sections. The first section describes how each of the two groups makes self-definitions, while the second section assesses how and why participants make definitions about others. Within this categorization the main questions to be addressed in this chapter are:

i. What is the purpose of making definitions in an account?
ii. How do individual narrators want to present their collective/personal characteristics?
iii. Why do they regard it as important to define themselves in terms of nationalist identities?
iv. What is the meaning of this nationalism?
v. How do personal experiences affect perceptions?

6.1. Self-Definitions: 'We are Nationalist' versus 'We are not Terrorists'

6.1.1. How do Turks Define Themselves?

Since the 1990s, Kurds have appeared as the main 'other' to Turkish society. Recent definitions of Turkishness have been reasserted in response to clashes between the PKK and the Turkish army, although, of course, this is not the only factor affecting the new definitions and perceptions of either self or other. That said, the data collected for this research suggests that the Kurdish Question has greater influence

on new ethnic-identity definitions than the Armenian case, European Union relations and other national/international affairs. In the many cases in which nationalism has been stirred up, such as in the event of political crises between the Turkish state and such actors as Armenia and the EU, it would appear that the most prominent means of identity positioning is as a 'nationalist' subject.

The expression 'I am a nationalist person,' which is analogous to a declaration of patriotism, appears as an introductory theme in the narratives of the Turkish participants, and can be considered as the normal position of nationalism in the political field. It is crucial to note, however, that declaring oneself a 'nationalist' does not carry the same meaning for all subjects, and this section will discuss the various meanings of nationalist self-identity.

As a narrative strategy, referring to oneself as a nationalist appears to be a 'taken-for-granted' element of the accounts of the Turkish respondents. Of the 22 Turkish participants, only one did not refer to themselves as 'a nationalist person'. This struck me as unusual, and so I asked the participant directly whether or not he defined himself as nationalist. He said, in no uncertain terms: 'No, I am not. I am not even close to the idea of being nationalist.' The other Turkish participants were quite keen to express that they were nationalists. Prior to the interviews, I had some idea about the extent to which Turkish people defined themselves in this way, but I did not realise just how widespread, banal and taken-for-granted this standpoint was. More than a mere label of political position, it is also a sign of loyalty and honesty as a citizen of the country, and can almost be considered a prerequisite for citizenship and a sense of belonging within society. People expressed the idea that every citizen should possess a natural nationalist sense, and that this should carry an emotional and moral meaning. As one participant said:

> *"First of all we all should look at ourselves. If we are living on the land of this country, we need to love here. This is nationalism. Do you understand? Is there any other definition of it? I don't think so. I mean, you have to be always aware of potential threats. If you are not a nationalist, I can never trust you. Ok? I may not predict when you would betray me, but because you do not feel any integrity about this*

> *country and the people in it, you can easily sell everything." (Ufuk, Turkish, male, 39)*

I also observed during the interviews that whereas nationalism is seen as a sacred and unquestionable issue, defining oneself as 'nationalist, a patriot who is loyal to the country' seems to be an efficient form of self-representation. This is a widely and much-approved way of reflecting on oneself in a political situation, as the following interview except shows:

> *"I define myself as a nationalist. It is not a bad thing, is it? Aren't we all nationalists? We love our country. We do not want to lose it, do we? Hmmm, I mean it is better than being a separatist. Our ancestors were heroes; we owe them for this country. We love our country, our state, our religion and honour. For me, this is what it means to be nationalist." (Nihan, Turkish, female, 43)*

As a narrative strategy, defining oneself as a nationalist cannot be understood only as a motive driven by 'security anxiety'. It is a taken-for-granted form of representing oneself as a subject in terms of a social and political stance. This research will make no such discussion of the psychological roots of this phenomenon, but generally it can be said that it is a way of articulating to hegemonic thinking that creates an unquestionable position within the common sense. Even people who are not involved in politics at all may pretend to be politically active, which can be referred to as 'the policy of the apolitical stance'. Over the last two decades, the political identity of apolitical people has been unquestionably Kemalist, which refers to being loyal to the state and army, and respecting the basic components of the Republic and the Constitution, especially secularism. With the upsurge in the conflict between the PKK and the Turkish army, nationalism usurped Kemalism as the dominant political discourse, bringing with it such other political ideologies as Islamism and conservatism. This does not mean that nationalism ignores Kemalism as an ideology, but rather is articulated with it; and the new transformations in the political space have made room for other dominant articulations, such as nationalism-Islamism and liberalism-nationalism.[35]

[35] See Chapter 1 for a discussion on the changing political articulations and tendencies since the 1980s in Turkey.

Nationalist self-definitions appear in a variety of contexts in Turkey, and are common in discussions of political and social issues in daily speech and in the media. For example, a person accused of smuggling, theft or even worse crimes may say: 'Am I Armenian or Rum, Kurdish or a member of the PKK? I am a nationalist person. Why do you mistreat me?' Another person convicted of rape may say, 'I am a nationalist person; nobody can accuse me of anything.'36

Another interesting form of self-expression concerns the use of the Turkish flag. Cirakman argues that 'on ordinary days, flags hang out of the windows and shops and are displayed in the rear windows of cars much more often than before in Turkey' (2011: 1898). For example, during a shantytown demolition, a Turkish flag was hung from a balcony of the building that was going to be demolished in order to protect it. Even in tragic and urgent situations people sometimes use the 'sacred' meaning of the flag. Hanging the flag from a balcony or displaying the flag in a car conveys the meaning 'I am a nationalist person', while in some situations means 'I am a nationalist person. If required, I will fight to protect our sacred values and the unity of the country.' These uses of the Turkish flag in everyday life by ordinary Turks are quite self-considered and explicit acts of nationalism.

The act of identifying oneself as a nationalist was not limited to the interviews that I conducted. While working in the field I observed and personally experienced people challenging nationalist identifications and declaring their nationalist identities in various environments. One particular observation I made during the course of the fieldwork exemplified an aggressive way of defining oneself as a Turkish nationalist and imposing power over the 'other'. While in a hospital garden waiting for one of my friends I heard voices and saw people walking over to where the noise was coming from. I joined them and saw a group of young uniformed intern doctors. As the two of them were fighting, the others were trying to break them up. One was shouting:

36 The statement, 'Am I Armenian or Rum, Kurdish or a member of the PKK?' was also a catchphrase from a popular TV series called 'Behzat C.', which has quite a critical political context. This statement has been used in various situations after it was popularised in the series as a part of the dialogue, and has grown in popularity since to become a slogan.

> *"You are a terrorist; you do not have to live here. If you support them that much, go up to the mountain like your perfidious siblings. Stay away from us."*

I understood the situation and started to take notes. I did not hear any response from the other intern, who was possibly Kurdish, but he had clearly been badly beaten. After the crowd broke up a few minutes later I approached a woman intern who may have seen what had happened and I asked for details. She told me that the Kurdish man was their colleague, and that he had very radical political views that they could not accept. She avoided giving details at first, but then subtly started to say more. Her exact words were:

> *"He is a terrorist. He graduated from the universities of this country and became a doctor, just like us. I do not know what he wants. He behaves like a guerrilla. He always shares messages of support for the Kurds who attack us. You know that they always attack us and kill our soldiers. Can you believe that? I am witness to the fact that the other guy who beat him had warned him several times, but he did not care. Actually, he deserved it. My friends and I will never be close to him again. I am sure of that."*

Needless to say, being a nationalist and defining one's self as a nationalist carries quite positive connotations in the presented accounts. In other words self-definition as a nationalist functions as a strategy of self-legitimisation in daily life. Although all of the narratives about being a nationalist are built upon a constructive, protective and defensive discourse formation, they can easily become pushy, aggressive and destructive, with sentiments about annihilating the enemy. As one participant said:

> *"I do not have even a small problem with the Kurds around me. They are everywhere. We do not have any serious problem but we are not so close to each other. But if I feel any unrest in my street for example ... because of them of course, I will have a severe reaction to them. We have nationalist sensitivities, and these are sacred to us." (Ali, Turkish, male, 24)*

Being a (Turkish) nationalist is not an undesirable stance either for Kurds or Turks. In Turkish accounts, people often declare 'Sure, I am a nationalist person' when they wish to depict themselves in a powerful and legitimatising language; while in

Kurdish accounts it is a more an act of self-defence that is stated at the very beginning of the interview to ensure their loyalty will not be mistaken. This was not the case for all the Kurdish participants who took part in the research, in that those with a national and ethnic consciousness and a clearer political perspective defined themselves rather as Kurdish nationalists, and so this was not an issue for them.

Although identifying oneself as a Turkish nationalist is often a natural reflex, declaring oneself as a Kurdish nationalist is justified as a result of an action and reaction process. In their accounts, the Kurdish participants emphasised that they had held no nationalist feelings prior to their mistreatment at the hands of the Turkish state. A common expression was, 'We accept your nationalism, but if you impose it upon us, we will insist on our own nation and nationalism as well.' It has been stated that Kurdish nationalism is not a taken-for-granted concept for any Kurd, as both the Kurdish movement and Kurdish nationalism revived in response to the nationalist policies of the Turkish state towards the Kurds.

Another factor of the Kurdish Question related to the importance of identity is the pronunciation of the PKK acronym. While the Turkish pronunciation, 'PeKaKa', implies the illegal positioning of the group as a terrorist organisation, the pronunciation in Kurdish, 'PeKeKe', means that the Kurdish movement is recognised in some respects. This general distinction was confirmed during my interviews. While the Turks and some Kurdish participants used the Turkish pronunciation of the abbreviation, other Kurdish respondents prefer to use the Kurdish pronunciation to mark their political stance. Everyone is aware of the distinction, but the Kurds are particularly and intentionally careful about using the Turkish pronunciation to indicate their stance by avoiding the use of PKK in their mother tongue.

6.1.2. How do Kurds Define Themselves?

Kurdish accounts tend to refer to the common perceptions of the Kurds in the eyes of Turkish society. In other words, the Kurdish self-image is often constructed vis-à-vis the Turks. It was common in the accounts of Kurds to express the idea that, 'We are not the kind of people you think we are,' which was based on the Kurdish participants' own experiences and stories, and was used in the forming of self-expression and criticism of the general perceptions of Turks. This tendency can be observed in both the language they use and in the content of their accounts, and makes their narratives comparative and self-defensive. Although they begin by accepting the poor reputation of the Kurds, they move on to explain the circumstances surrounding – and reasons for – their behaviour. This can be seen as both a clarifying and a legitimising strategy, as the Narin's narrative shows:

> *"Kurds are perceived as impolite people. Yes this is true on one level. Of course normality changes from culture to culture. In the simplest terms, they show themselves [wear skimpy clothing] when they are at the seaside, I can also see it; but they have a culture. When they are eating, Kurdish families sit separately, but this is a custom rather than being related to ethnicity. People find it strange, because they do not know anything about that region. I explain to them that I know some Turkish families practicing these customs as well. But they see everything from the perspective of race. They explain it as racial backwardness. It is exactly the same situation with the perception of African communities. We believe that they are under civilised but they do not. How can you define the civilisation? It depends." (Narin, Kurdish, female, 31)*

There is another subject about which the Kurds regularly defend themselves in their narratives; proving their loyalty to the Republic of Turkey. While this argument cannot be generalised for all Kurdish participants, it was underlined by most of them, and Onur's account serves as an example. Onur is a 55 year old Kurdish man who has lived in Ankara for 40 years. He is a shopkeeper and has a great interest in politics. Even though he has some conflicting thoughts about the Kurdish Question, he emphasised his basic political stance by saying 'my family and my ancestors have never engaged in an act of betrayal. We have been always loyal to this country and

the state.' He repeated this sentence four times at different points in his account. After legitimating his political stance, he spoke about the discredited position that Kurds have had in society for many years:

> *"Before the terrorism issues, we had a greatly respected position in society because of our manliness and our courage. We lost it after the 1990s. At the time of our migration here, the relationship was completely different. When a person said "I am Kurdish," he was welcomed with respect and sympathy. The people who knew that I was Kurdish behaved better towards me when I was in secondary school and high school. Kurds were liked at that time. After the terrorism thing appeared, the Kurds were damaged; they lost their prestige and credibility in society. Kurds were liked and they tried to be deserving of it. They were seen as manly, brave and friendly. That was in my university days. My Kurdish friends were always treated as proper people. There were not that many Kurds in the big cities and they were appreciated in the places where they went." (Onur, Kurdish, male, 55)*

While the Kurds are aware of their negative image in the wider Turkish society, they sought to highlight the fact that positive characteristics were frequently attributed to them in social discourse before the eruption of terrorism. While Turks do at times refer to the hospitability, generosity, bravery and honesty of the Kurds at times, which can be conceptualized as 'orientalisation of Kurdishness from a Western perspective', this is not embedded in the collective memory of the younger generation. It cannot be said that a positive image of the Kurds has been wiped entirely from public memory; however, the general perception of the Kurds is still a challenging issue. Turks' perceptions of Kurds will be discussed in detail in the next section, but it should be stated here that Kurds aim to draw attention to and accentuate these positive connotations through their accounts. Kurds are upset by how their image has transformed, and this makes them want to keep earlier positive images alive and to prove their accuracy with more recent experiences. The Kurdish respondents articulate their accounts into an oriental representation of Kurdishness, which was originally a component of the Turkish nationalist narrative.

> *"Believe me; Kurdish people are more open to having a relationship with Turks. I do not say that because I am Kurdish, but I observe that Kurds are not prejudiced. Actually I do not like to use the word 'Kurd', but if a Turk comes closer one step, the Kurd comes two steps*

forward in brotherhood. However they have same reflexes in situations involving conflict. If a Turk says something, the Kurd says more. It is the natural disposition of the Kurds. The people of the 'east' are kind of rude due to the environment in which they grew up." (Onur, Kurdish, male, 55)

"If I invite you to our house in the village, even if you are Turkish, I swear that in any case, they will treat you with great respect. They are that hospitable." (Yavuz, Kurdish, male, 26).

In their accounts, the Kurdish participants admitted to the existence of negative images of the Kurds, but they are motivated to challenge such images, to prove that they are friendly, forgiving and open to forming relationships with Turks. All of these stories communicate one essential message, 'We are trying to show what we are really like so that they will accept us.' The Kurds narrate their stories of 'building close relationships with Turks' as successes. Through these stories we see that Kurds believe that they must prove themselves to Turks in order to have relationships with them. That is, they feel the need to be self-sacrificing and forgiving, and then they wait to be accepted by Turks:

"We are friendly, everyone should know it. I know children who were locked in their houses for playing with me in my childhood; but of course we went to school together and we got closer there. The families could not prevent it. Then they recognised that I am not as bad as they thought, and they allowed their children to play with me. After we grew up they explained to me themselves "because we knew that you are Kurd we did not let our children be friends with you. Because you were Kurdish and you were from Haymana. But you cannot be from there". I heard these kinds of stories from my friends all the time. Firstly, they behaved as if we were cannibals, eating human flesh, and then when they see our humanity, everything changes. I do not believe that any region's people can be as hospitable as us." (Omer, Kurdish, male, 35)

"One day there was a funeral in the neighbourhood. We went to the funeral house with our friend from the party (Peace and Democracy Party/Baris ve Demokrasi Partisi). When our friends said that we were party members the entire atmosphere changed in a negative way. I called my wife and asked her to cook for the funeral house. Then they said to me that only you and your friends brought a meal on the funeral day. After this we became closer, and now we have a good

friendship with those people. I mean everything [negative perceptions] was like that until they got to know us." (Nazim, Kurdish, male, 36)

"Aunty Gulsen was our next-door neighbour. She lived in flat number 8, we lived in number 9. She had grandchildren who were the same age as my brother. They fought in front of the apartment and my brother hit one of the children and that child threw a stone at my brother's leg. But they were just 9 years old. We heard crying in the apartment and my mother went downstairs and I saw her shouting at my brother. Aunty Gulsen came down and started yelling: "Aren't you Kurdish? You are just making trouble everywhere you go." I was surprised because we were so close. She was my mother's only friend in the neighbourhood. I could not believe that she thought that way. They did not talk to each other for around 2–3 months; then one night the doorbell rang. It was quite late. Her husband's blood pressure had gone up. She was so worried and in shock. My older brother is a doctor and he was at home at the time. He checked the husband and took him to the hospital. After this event we never talked about their dispute again. We never said a word about it. We just helped them when they needed it. I believe that they understood then that we were not bad people. The situation was about the life of a person. It was about humanity."(Narin, Turkish, female, 31)

From these accounts it is evident that the inequality in the interaction was ignored by the Kurdish narrators. It was taken for granted that having a trusting relationship with Turks involves inequality. The kind of interaction described involves having an encounter with a Turkish person, being subject to a negative action by that person and, in reaction, behaving with devotion to prove their real intention and their humanity. After the Turkish person changes their behaviour and attitudes in favour of the Kurds, the Kurdish person no longer cares about the inequality in the relationship. They accept that they need to try hard to be accepted and to be more visible in social relations.

It must be stated that interactions between the two groups, both in the neighbourhood and in the workplace, are quite limited in everyday life. In other words, casual and random encounters do occur, but members of neither group put particular effort into building relationships with one another, and the reasons for this lack of interaction are listed as cultural differences, contrasting life perspectives, and so forth. The only clear explanation stated through the interviews is that Kurds have a close-knit and

strict network that is closed to non-Kurds and those outside of the extended family, and this form of socialisation may be defined as ‘compulsory introversion’.

This explanation was also common in the Turkish accounts, but in the Kurdish accounts it appeared as a distinct theme in defining the Kurds. Being part of a large network consisting of immediate family members, relatives and other tribal connections appears as a natural way of life for Kurds; and they define themselves within these relations. Specifically, they present these networks as a homogenous body whose identity is no different from their own personal identity. They are proud of the strength of these relations, and complain if they are transformed under the dynamics of modern life. The theme of taking care of each other and providing comfortable and safe conditions for the members of their networks features strongly in their accounts:

> *“People say that Kurds are very keen on their families and relatives, and in fact all the Kurds, even people they do not know. Yes, they are right. If it wasn’t for our strong family and tribal ties, everything would be worse today. We came from a war. It was a traumatic experience for us. We needed to have people in Ankara when we arrived here, and they helped us. If they hadn’t, we could have been on the streets. Fortunately we have primary connections here. In this way we survived in that period.” (Yakup, Kurdish, male, 30)*

> *“Yes we look after each other wherever we are, because we aware that if we become weak in a place, in a workplace or a neighbourhood, we can be discriminated against. We stand close to each other because we need to defend ourselves. For example, in market places we are strong and all the Turks are annoyed about that, but we have to, because we remember our bitter experiences in the Kecioren market places where some organised groups attacked us. They wanted to kick us out of there and we resisted. Now we have to stay closer to each other to look after ourselves.” (Nazim, Kurdish, male, 36)*

In the course of the interviews I asked the question ‘Do you like to have interactions with your Turkish neighbours, and do you have Turkish friends from workplaces and school?’ The answers were similar for all Kurdish participants, to the effect: ‘We generally meet with our relatives. It is so rare to meet with our neighbours. We have big families, and so we always have guests’ (Filiz, female, 27). In other words, the

habit of socialising in one specific network is led not only by the motivation to be more powerful, as although the Kurds stay close together in response to insecure situations, they also do so because this is part of their custom and the traditional way of life.

As in the public discourse, Kurds define themselves as a group with the highest sense of honour. In their accounts, several participants aimed to show how proud they were of their close relationships, how they perceived honour and how they behaved to protect it. Filiz's story is a striking example of this, as a Kurdish woman who was born and grew up in Haymana:

> *"I want to tell you about a situation that arose in our village. It started in our village and then jumped to the other villages as well. The drug business is so common in Yenidogan. Drug dealing was happening everywhere, in the streets, around the houses. Someone started to sell drugs in front of the house of the families from our village. They were told several times that women and children were living there and that they should go to another place to sell their things. The dealers did not care about it, and just kept selling. They broke into a house when the woman was alone and threatened her, so the woman called her husband. Our men are so protective of their wives and children. They are crazy about their honour. It was a case of "how can you enter my house when I am not in the house?" Everyone heard about it in a short time. The guy from our village came together with the guys from other villages and they raided the home of that dealer guy. The required warning was made by 200 people. They never sold anything there after that. I mean honour is the most important thing for them. They cannot stand it. No man can enter any house if there is not a man in the home. Some 150 men shouted slogans in the street carrying sticks as a warning to the drug dealers." (Filiz, female, 27)*

As stated by Filiz, individual conflicts do not stay at a personal level. Being a member of a minority group eases the transformation of the personal cases into a communal level.

This research set out to focus on ordinary people, with little regard attributed to politics, however it was nearly impossible to find such a respondent among the Kurds. It could thus be understood that Kurds of all financial and educational statuses and from different age groups had an obvious political identity. Even 17-

year-old high school students and housewives who only a primary education had a distinct political language, as well as their own observations and arguments. They were quite confident about their political identities and arguments, and frequently pointed out that they were different from the majority of society due to their knowledge of, and interest in, social problems:

> *"People are ignorant. Look! You are in the university. Compare it to your environment. The Kurdish youth are informed about everything. They know very well what is what. In contrast, 90 per cent of Turkish youth are unaware of political issues. Go and sit in a coffeehouse/teahouse in Diyarbakir and you will see many people whose appearance is awful, whose clothes are too old, but when you talk to them your jaw will drop. You cannot imagine such great political analyses as they give. They are far superior to the TV pundits who are paid a lot." (Ahmet, Kurdish, male, 35)*

> *"People just repeat second-hand ideas about the Kurdish Question. The arguments they defend are not actually theirs. I am proud of myself and my family for not being like them. At least I am able to think and compare the arguments that I hear. I don't just repeat the general approved ideas about the issue. I research by reading different perspectives. While I compare myself with them, I put myself at a higher point." (Guliz, Kurdish, female, 17)*

Kurds do not compare themselves only with Turks, as they also make comparisons with other Kurds from different cities of Turkey and different sects. While at times these comparisons appear to be a sign of regionalism, at other times they refer to the common distinction of bad-good Kurds, and often define themselves as legal and loyal Kurds. Making distinctions within the Kurdish group does not always seem to be a political reflex to legitimise one's own identity. The Kurds living in the Turkish territories are extremely heterogeneous in terms of their religious sects and spoken languages. Differences in dialect, religious sect, tribe and clan exist and define people as Kurdish. For example, Alevi Kurds[37] make a strict distinction between themselves and other Saffi and Sunni Kurds by highlighting their more 'modern' way of life based on their interpretation of religion. Another aspect of these differentiations relates to the good-bad Kurd categorisation that is common in

[37] See Chapter 1 for detailed information about Alevi Kurds in Turkey.

Turkish society. As Kurds are designated as either terrorist Kurds or normal (loyal) Kurds, they refer to this categorisation and define themselves by trying to prove their assimilated Kurdishness.

> *"All we know about our ancestors is that they came from Horasan to Sivas, but when you look at the customs of the Kurds living in the south-east, they are completely different from ours. Even our language is closer to Turkish, for example tomato is tomato in our language as well. There are several different Kurdish communities, such as Zazas and Kirmancis. When I compare my family with the south-eastern Kurds I cannot make a connection. I know some people from that region, but we have nothing in common. How can I put it? Their family life is stricter. Although we have also maintained our customs, they are not like their customs. Their rules restrict way of life and have a great power over people, especially women. We are more relaxed in these issues." (Selen, female, 31)*

Creating an image of the 'loyal citizen' appeared to be a powerful motivation for self-definition in the interviews. While Kurds define themselves by referring to the other 'bad' Kurds and sharpening their own positive characteristics as a self-defence strategy, in the Turkish accounts, self-definitions appear to act as a self-explanatory way of proving their patriotism.

6.2. Definitions of others: 'The Good-Bad Kurd distinction' versus 'We are not the bad people you think we are'

> *"Turkey is interesting; it is colourful, but the colours are not beautiful. Everything is like mud." (Guliz, female, Kurdish, 17)*

Thus far I have focused on the narrative strategy in making self-definitions. The counter approach is making definitions of others as another way of defining the self, and vice versa. The question of "how people set about this task of [ethnic] identity construction and maintenance" (Kiely et al. 2001: 33) emerges as a prominent one through the personal narratives. As Kiely et al. assert in order to understand the ways of identification of individuals are required to examine the interactions in different layers. They prefer to examine three related processes: "people's own claims to identity; how they attribute identity to others; how they themselves receive the

claims of others or react to identity attributed to another by a third party" (Kiely et al. 2001: 36). In this research all the processes that they stated are took into account when the data was analysed. The first thing can be said about the identification forms in the case of Turkey, both Kurd and Turk participants dealing with an ethnic form of nationalism rather than civic.

Locating identities should not be seen as a simple sub-theme of the accounts. Rather, all positioning of identities by the participants should be seen as a determining factor of the narratives. Through these definitions, the respondents construct the general ideological structure of their accounts, presenting their ideological preferences and building their stories as part of their definitions of identity. In this regard it is important to understand the motives of the participants in making definitions of others, how they define others and what kind of references they make in their stories. These are the questions that this section aims to address.

6.2.1. How do Turks define others?

Stereotyping, generalising and presenting the entire Kurdish community as a homogeneous entity, thus erasing difference and refuting alternative claims of identity, was the most prominent narrative strategy in the Turkish accounts. As a way of understanding the world, the way of thinking and the method of narration, this strategy is commonplace in daily political conversations, and are based on collective thought. The collective language is influenced strongly by the hate speech expressed in the speeches of political leaders and in media coverage, and as a result, accusations for the most prominent elements of these accounts. While narrating is accepted as a means of understanding the situation, the making of definitions presents a challenge by which the narrators link their stories to structured definitions. In other words, most of the narratives have multiple discursive levels, such as:

i. Seeing all Kurds as terrorists,
ii. classifying Kurds as good and bad,

iii. Legitimising the categorisation by presenting personal experiences that attest to the good relations the narrator has with some 'good Kurds'.

As will be shown in the following section, the accounts do not present one cohesive argument from beginning to the end. A narrative is a process in which the narrator starts with a basic argument and then is compelled to legitimise it by recounting illustrative stories. For this reason, the accounts are discussed following a discursive process rather than highlighting the striking themes within them.

The first discursive level of the accounts involves accusing all Kurds of being bad people who have hidden ill intentions towards the state, and further labelling them as terrorists or at least sympathisers of the PKK. In Turkish accounts, this emerged as a kind of reflex that was accompanied by outbursts of anger, mirroring the self-defence reflexes of Kurdish participants. While this 'confession' is often made at the beginning of the account, in some cases it appears towards the end; however the point at which the reflex appears has consequences on the way in which the remainder of the account is produced, in terms of both content and language. While some accounts start by labelling all Kurds as terrorists, and later try to cover this 'unfair' argument, other accounts end with the confession, explaining that although there are some good Kurds, even they cannot be proper people, as can be seen in Neriman's account:

> *"I can say that all Kurds sympathise with the PKK. It is a kind of a proof that they protect each other all the time. They just engage in regionalism. Sometimes I wonder whether it is us that are the minority, rather than them. I am anxious about the environment in which our children will grow up. Things are not going well. I think in that way because I have experienced things that reinforce my feelings, especially during the medical treatment of my mum in hospital. The story of a Kurdish boy I met in the hospital at that time says so many things about my concerns. After arriving in Ankara he bought a house, he found a job and he was treated very well thanks to his Kurdish network in a very, very short period of time. Can you imagine that? There is a significant inequality in between us in terms of opportunities that are open to us. They communicate by the means of their "detectors". There were times when I was paranoid about whether a Kurdish doctor gave my turn to a Kurdish person, or whether a Kurdish pharmacist would give me the wrong drug. I*

> *always hear these kinds of negative cases around me." (Neriman, Turkish, female, 54)*

In some Turkish accounts the good-bad classification of Kurds was also challenged. As could be seen in Berk's account, the Kurdish movement is led by Kurdish nationalist sensitivities. The nationalist nature of the Kurdish movement results in it being referred to as a fair struggle, however it is in direct contrast with Turkish nationalism. Presenting the Kurdish movement in this way depicts all nationalist ideologies, practices and policies are seen entirely legitimate, and bestows nationalism with a universally sacred position. Unsurprisingly, this thinking justifies all means of reaching nationalist goals. Seeing the struggle of the Kurds as legitimate and permissible also makes the policies, attacks and counter-attacks of the Turkish state legitimate, and for this reason it is not possible to interpret Berk's account of sacrifice as a counter-narrative, trying to empathise with activist Kurds, but rather as a contribution to the approach of the Turkish army and state. Departing from this perspective, Berk considers the Kurds are to be mistrusted as a result of their sacred aims to try to succeed. He states that:

> *"I have a hypothesis about this issue. Let's switch positions. Imagine that we are Kurdish and we are living in Kurdistan as a minority in their country. Just imagine the opposite situation. Imagine we grew up with the explanations that our nation has been suppressed and tortured. There is nothing like that in reality. Imagine that these ideas are passed down from your father to you, and he says "Come on son, we will establish our own country, a Turkistan in Kurdistan". Even if I had money and I was happy on this land, why would I not want to make it real? I would. That is why there is no such thing as a good Kurd for me. Just put yourself in their place. What if this dream was told to you for years…? It was made for years. These people have heard this story for years and I think it is a great dream for them. It would be great for the worst Kurd as well." (Berk, Turkish, male, 24)*

The account of Pelin, 23 year old, well-educated Turkish woman, is an interesting example of how the accusations aimed at Kurds are taken for granted. The common discursive elements are more salient in the accounts that contain no stories or personal experiences. In other words, regardless of whether or not the participant can recall a personal experience or story, the account produced appears to be a summary

of the official discourse. In the course of the interview with Pelin, she said repeatedly that she had never been interested in politics and that she could give no answers to the interview questions. Although I tried to encourage her to talk about her personal experiences, the interview was practically finished at her first answer: *'I have never met a Kurdish person'.* This answer became more understandable when she described her family background and her life. When I stopped asking questions she started to speak about her father and his nationalist, idealist political background. She admitted to having no idea about either nationalism or the Kurdish question; however, she did say a couple of sentences at the end of the interview about her father's ideas:

> *"I don't know them [the Kurds] very well but I think that they are trying to separate the country. I have no idea about the [Kurdish] question, but I think that it is not good. They want to divide the country and they kill the soldiers. It would not be easy to kill a human. They are just aiming to divide the country. That is why I agree with my dad. I think he is right. If they do not have good feelings for us, we should defend ourselves." (Pelin, Turkish, female, 23)*

Narratives that repeat the accusation and label Kurds as terrorists are not just fed by the general political discourse. Personal experiences are shaped and framed also by general perceptions of identities, and the inferences based on personal experiences are taken as generalisable truths about identities. As Tilly argues,

> *"…in everyday life we deploy practical knowledge. We draw practical knowledge from individual experience and from the social settings in which we live." (2006: 21).*

Inferences from personal experience are situated at the top of the hierarchy of credibility of truths, as is exemplified by Nermin's account. Nermin is a 53 year-old retired civil servant who has lived in Ankara her whole life. While she gave a conflicting account about the Kurdish question, she referred to her personal experiences to validate her definitions of Kurds:

> *"My friends were quite biased towards Kurds. I was not. I wanted to learn whether it was my friends or me that were right. One day in a fruit and vegetable market – you know they dominate these*

> *marketplaces in Ankara – I wanted to talk to one of the Kurdish salesman. I began by asking him "How are things going?" He started to complain about everything – sales, customers, money ... I asked him "Why do you insist on staying here if you are not happy?" He said to me "We do not want to leave these places empty. He means that you want to stay here to kick up something'. My nationalist emotions were suddenly aroused due to his response. That is why I am angry with them. I do not think that they are honest in their feelings. I will say something to their faces as well, and maybe that is why they find me more intimate and sincere. I do not have any secret intentions or feelings about them. I tell the shopkeeper story to my Kurdish friends as well. If you do not like this city, go back to where you came from and the Turkish people who are living there can come here. Just like it was with Greece before. If you work there, it is a nice place to live as well. Instead of being the slaves of your masters, go and work there properly. Your Kurdish businessmen can build factories there to provide working facilities. We may even support you in doing this. But they do not want to do this; they always keep some hidden and bad ideas in their heads. At my age I do not find them honest. I am 53. I have experienced so many things during my lifetime and now I am convinced that they are not frank and honest. None of them." (Nermin, Turkish, female, 53)*

During the interviews the theme of 'being a slave to the masters' is referred to in many ways by Kurds, and implies that Kurds are passive and subject to the rules of their masters by way of their tribal affiliations. Even today, in Kurdish culture tribal relations have a determining impact on the way of life of the individual. The general rules that are announced by the masters are almost obligatory for all members of the tribe in terms of politics and way of life. The master may change, but the rules remain the same for centuries, and absolute loyalty is expected from all members of the tribe. This is a well-known and often referred-to aspect of the Kurdish culture. It has been particularly represented in TV series over the past decade, and creates a passive image of Kurd in the eyes of the public. In media representations, the passive position of the average and poor Kurds is explained by a lack of education. Kurds are referred to as a drove of sheep, moving together without thinking and obeying rules without criticising. They are perceived by Turks to be not progressing, not becoming civilised and not being educated as a result of their subordinate position in social relations. In popular discourse it is often repeated that Kurds who are in the position of 'the slave' are guilty of not trying hard enough to break the rules and to make decisions about their own lives. In other words, their social position is interpreted as

passive and a collective weakness that is depicted as the racial weakness of a nation. From this perspective, it becomes easy to assert that Kurds do not have the capacity for self-determination, and that they will always need masters to control them. In popular nationalist discourse, even the Kurdish movement for national self-determination is deemed incapable of autonomous governance due to the lack of experience of having a Kurdish state historically. It is claimed that as the Kurds have always lived under the rule of other administrations, they have neither the ability nor the power required to achieve this aim. It is necessary to state at this point that there is a growing interest in conspiracy theories that reveal how Turkish pride can be destroyed by the enemies from within and outside. That being said, mostly the PKK, but also Kurds in general feature in these conspiracy theories. In other words, Kurds are represented as internal traitors who collaborate with the external enemy. There is a common belief that they still serve Turkey's external enemies, such as the United States, Israel, Iraq, Syria and countries in Europe. According to this theory, the masters have changed, but the same scenario is again unfolding in which the Kurds are represented as cheated and passively used actors within it. One of the examples frequently given during the interviews was the high level of fertility among the Kurds and the hidden intention to take control when their numbers are high enough:

> *"They just believe in the United States and Israel. Why? They comprise 20 percent of the population now, but they are going to have 70 percent of Turkey in 50 years … While a normal Turkish family has three children, they have 17children: five times more than us. In the end they will proliferate and they will take control. While they procreate, the number of Turks will decrease. It will be in favour of the external enemies like the United States and Israel who already control Syria and Iraq. They take courage from somewhere. They are brave enough to throw stones at the police. A Parliament member did this, can you believe that? Another of them, also a Parliament member, slapped a policeman. Some 10-12 years ago they were not as comfortable as they are now. Although speaking Kurdish was banned at that time, they still spoke Kurdish in secret. It was made clear that the language of the citizens was Turkish, and people were not allowed to speak another one. Now everything has completely changed. They even have a Kurdish channel in the state television service." (Mehmet, Turkish, male, 32)*

Another issue raised by Turks in their accounts was the 'ignorant and uncivilised 'nature' of Kurds'. Surprisingly, the most frequently referred to subject in this respect was women/gender. In referring to the perception of Kurds as passive, ignorant and rude people, the position of women in Kurdish society was often touched upon. The Turkish participants stated that Kurdish women were the most disadvantaged group in society due to the strict Kurdish traditions and the patriarchal structure of Kurdish society, and such perceptions are based on the high proportion of cases of domestic violence against Kurdish women and the way in which these cases are represented by the media. The Turkish participants also considered Kurdish characters in TV series and movies to be representative of Kurds, and media representations of Kurds as violent, criminal, unable to speak Turkish properly; rude and oppressive towards women reinforce these stereotypical ideas. The moral laws, honour killings and the disadvantaged position of women in Kurdish society are the most commonly criticised aspects of Kurds, with the treatment of women mentioned by all of Turkish participants, without exception. While this sensitivity seems to be a positive acknowledgment of a critical social issue, it creates a kind of illusion about a social fact. While violence against women is constructed as a Kurdish, it is not a problem only within the Kurdish community, as the oppression of women is a common and rising problem accross Turkish society. Kurds are depicted as the only group who are guilty of oppressing women, and the violence against women that occurs on the Turkish side is ignored. Explanations based on the notion of race do not adequately capture the complexity of the issue.

6.2.1.1. The Distinction of 'Good' and 'Bad' Kurds

"There are good Kurds and bad Kurds.
Isn't it the same for Turks?" (Gulsum, Kurdish, female, 49)

In the Turkish accounts, Kurds are repeatedly subjected to the distinction 'Good Kurds' and 'Bad Kurds', which is based on the idea that 'not all Kurds are terrorists, and all nations have good and bad people'. This expression is one of the most common in daily political discussions related to the Kurdish Question. In their narratives, most participants insisted that there were two categories of Kurds: one which includes normal, non-politicised people who have no bad and/or separatist

intentions regarding Turks and the state, while the other includes terrorists or people who are close to being terrorists due to their political identities. Most definitions of Kurds are made referring to this classification.

The Turkish participants stated that at the level of ordinary life, they had no problems with the Kurds in their cities, streets or workplaces, but they may have problems if they encountered 'bad' Kurds. Such encounters with this 'small provocateur' group are unlikely, as sympathisers tend to live as introverted groups in big cities or in the mountains as guerrillas:

> *"What kind of problem may we have? Of course we do not have any problem with Kurds. As long as they do not touch us, we do not touch them. After all, we have a common history. We fought together in the War of Independence. Yes we have some problems right now, but it does not mean that all Kurds are terrorists. There are only some bad people among them, it is usual, all societies have these kinds of people. I personally have no bad experiences with them" (Adil, Turkish, male, 51)*

Throughout the interviews, the Turks concretised the ambivalent category of bad Kurds embedded in their minds, in which the 'bad' Kurds are a hypothetical group, living somewhere and working to achieve their bad aims. For the majority of participants it was obvious which Kurdish groups should be categorised as 'bad', 'harmful' and 'dangerous'; however, the perceived markers of this category varied between participants. Although most participants accused Kurds living together in the same neighbourhood of being terrorists, some also depicted the bad Kurds as living in faraway places, which makes interaction with them improbable. The common idea was that the category 'bad Kurds' is not limited to guerrillas living in the mountains, but includes also Kurds with hidden dangerous intentions that could be found everywhere: in big cities, in the east or even in their own neighbourhoods.

The categorisation of the Kurds was made clearer in two particularly interesting interviews. Although Berk and Gulsum gave completely different accounts in terms of political perspectives and ideological stances, they share a common motive in the

interview: levelling the Kurds in terms of political identity and ideology that they have and where they live.

Berk is a 24 year-old Turkish man who lives in Ankara, and who graduated from a private university, after which he spent eight months in London, attending an English language course. According to Berk, this period of his life modified his political stance. In his words:

> *"While I did not like Kurds before, after I went to London, the things I saw there completely reinforced my ideas. I went there as an ordinary nationalist, and when I came back I was a racist. Do you know what the Kurds do in London, all over the United Kingdom? They say 'we are Turkish' and using the name of Turks and tarnishing it. Only because of this, all British people hate Turks now. And they are right. All of the Kurds living there, I mean all of them, are terrorists. I do not hesitate in saying that. I can say this everywhere. I saw it. I observed everything there for myself, they distribute flyers, calendars, etc., with Apo's[38] photo on them. They use the Kurdish flag everywhere; they hang PKK flags in their shops and flats. I am sure that this is a big game that is directed by big countries like the United States and some European countries, and we do not have even a small role in this game. The Kurds are so confident there. Not like in Turkey. In Turkey they do not have the comfort to express their poisonous ideas in this way. I observed everything there and nobody can change my mind anymore. I know that all the Kurds living abroad, at least in the United Kingdom, are terrorists." (Berk, Turkish, male, 24)*

Personal experiences have great power in the construction of personal inferences and their articulating into broader discourse. Berk's personal ideas, based on his experiences in London, apply not only to Kurds living in the United Kingdom, as they have altered also his perception of Kurds living in Turkey. He had Kurdish friends in Turkey and refers to them when describing the differences between Kurds in the United Kingdom and those in Turkey:

> *"I have Kurdish friends here in Turkey and we are so close to each other, but they have lived in Ankara for years. Even their families did not live in the eastern part of the country. They are Turk anymore. I*

[38] 'Apo' is an abbreviation of the name 'Abdullah'. In this context, the speaker is referring to Abdullah Ocalan, who is the leader of the PKK.

> *would not say that they are Kurdish, but after London, I am quite suspicious of all Kurds. All of those living in the eastern part of the country are potential terrorists, in my opinion. The thing I am not able to digest is their complaints about unemployment. They are weak. The richest men in Turkey are Kurdish. The coasts of the Mediterranean and the Aegean are in their hands, and still they say "we are hungry". This is terrorism." (Berk, male, Turkish, 24)*

It is possible to say that Berk's political perspective was sharpened in a negative way because of a particular experience, although this is not necessarily the only way of forming personal ideas about a subject. Political positioning is mostly produced and reproduced through the media, although this does not mean that audiences are passive recipients of messages conveyed by the media (Hall, 1973). That said, a lack of personal encounters on which to base a perception can make people more vulnerable to the meta-narratives of the media, as was the case in Gulsum's interview.

Gulsum was born in a Kurdish-dominated city, but she had no memory of an encounter with a Kurdish person worthy of recounting in the interview. When I asked the Turkish participants to tell more about their personal experiences of Kurds, they tended to understand this in a negative way and thus relayed bad experiences. Gulsum, a 49 year-old Turkish housewife who has lived in Ankara for 30 years declined to share any personal memories about the Kurds, although she did mention some general good memories, but only briefly: 'We lived together with them for years in our village. We were neighbours and then became relatives. I did not feel any disturbance and vice versa'. However, when the subject turned to the political base of the Kurdish issue, she made a firm distinction between Kurds. While she had a concrete memory of the good Kurds, she made abstractions of the other category. Her first categorisation was based on the distinction between Kurds living in south-eastern Turkey and Kurds living in the cities in the west of Turkey. In her good memories of her hometown, she positions the resident Kurds in the category of good, which reveals another distinction, as the one that exists between 'local-immigrant Kurds' and 'old Kurds-new Kurds'.

> *"I came to Ankara after I got married. I was 20 years old. There were Kurds in our village as well, we had Kurdish neighbours. Of course sometimes we had disputes, but the Kurds of that time and the new Kurds of today are not the same. At that time, my family was together with locally resident Kurds, and my aunt married a Kurd. Her children as well ... we have relatives who are locally resident Kurds. I mean the Kurds who have already lived there for ages. When my grandparents arrived, they were already there. They were living together for years. We still have relations. They gave their daughters to us and vice versa. They also spoke in Kurdish and are so religious. They strictly observe their traditions and customs. The Kurds of the present time are completely different from them. I do not believe that it is a Kurdish-Turkish issue. It is terrorism; it is an issue of participation." (Gulsum, female, Turkish, 49)*

Besides sharing her good memories about the Kurds living in her village, Gulsum reinforces her idea with stories told by her relatives. However, the series of ambivalent distinctions did not finish here. While she was talking, she remembered, eliminated and made links between her memories and her general ideas at the same time. In other words, while producing a narrative, she also produced and reproduced her account. That is why she changes her mind, contradicts her previously expressed ideas, and creates new types of classifications:

> *"Some police officers serving in the south eastern part of the country who are our relatives say that despite the presence of separatist Kurds, the majority of the people do not affiliate with the PKK. They have quite intimate neighbourhood relations with the Kurds living there. The resident Kurds are always respectful and hospitable to the doctors, teachers, soldiers and police working there. The real problem is related to the immigrant Kurds who are living in the western part. They probably could not find anything that would harm and separate the country in their villages and just migrated to the big cities. They purposefully settled among the Turks in big cities." (Gulsum, Turkish, female, 49)*

The accounts highlight the fact that identities are multi-layered, as the participants touched upon other components of identity. As a religious woman, Gulsum's 'religiosity', which is embedded in her personal discourse, played an important role in her narrative. She was sure about the religiosity of the locally resident Kurds who are from a Saffi sect; however, she is aware of the existence of the Alevi Kurds living in Turkey who have different religious practices from the Saffi and Sunni Muslims, and

who are not even seen as Muslim in many respects. Her classification is based on the religion that she refers to as 'another other' of the (Sunni) Muslim Turkish identity.

> *"The Kurds in the PKK are not Kurdish I think. They are neither Kurdish nor Muslim. They are of Armenian origin and came after, I mean, in the course of the war of Independence. You know, Armenians came to this side in the course of the war and pretended to be Kurds and then they settled here. I mean they are Kurds of Armenian origin. That is my idea. I think that everything is about religious belief."(Gulsum, Turkish, female, 49)*

The argument about the Kurds being Armenian is not an invention of Gulsum. *'Seed of Armenian'* is a popular discursive element that has been repeated in the media since the 1990s for Abdullah Ocalan, along with 'baby killer' and 'the head terrorist'. This emerges in Gulsum's account as part of a larger conspiracy theory – that Armenians pretending to be Turks infiltrated Turkey and are trying to divide the country.

Another level of definition of the Kurds is related to their assimilated identities as a way of entering Turkish society. It has been always possible for Kurds to gain a higher place in society, to have a career and to achieve an average standard of living, free from discrimination by pretending to be Turkish. A key principle of Turkish modernisation policy was to ignore ethnic differences and live under one common identity, that of Turkishness. In other words, ignoring ethnicity to achieve greater equality and living standards was part of the history of the Turkish state. However, with the rise in nationalism after the late 1980s, the politicisation of the Kurdish nation led to changes in this state policy. At this point, awareness of the existence of different identities grew, but it was nevertheless still expected during the early Republic that Kurds would abandon their ethnic identity (which was and is also a political identity) and become Turks, particularly after the 1980s. Today, Kurds who claim a political/ethnic identity as Kurdish are marked as dangerous and unwanted, while those who do not underline their ethnicity and do not express any Kurdish political allegiance are designated 'normal' and 'harmless'.

> *"I have Kurdish friends, but they have been living in Ankara for a long time and they do not have any problems with the system. The most radical thing they do is listen to Kurdish music. They respect me, and I also behave respectfully towards them. Most of my Kurdish friends do not speak Kurdish while we are together. I warned them a couple of times that they will only be my friends as long as they respect me. I would say that they are already assimilated. They have been changed. They are just struggling for their lives. All of my friends have legal jobs, they do not do anything to harm society and they do not encroach. That is why I do not even call them Kurdish. They are just my friends who I happen to know are Kurdish." (Volkan, Turkish, male, 36)*

As exemplified in many of the different accounts presented above, the distinction between good and bad Kurds is not a matter of distinguishing between guerrillas and ordinary Kurds. In other words, this is not a clash between guerrillas and the state army. The new scope for designating Kurds as 'bad' is wide, which makes Kurds in general more vulnerable to violence. The general criteria for the distinction between good and bad Kurds stems from to what extent a Kurd has a political articulation to the Kurdish movement. All of these efforts to define Kurds have the same objective: to recognise Kurds who have a particular political identity and political ideals. Although the narratives have different points of reference, their intentions are the same.

6.2.2. How do Kurds Define Others?

The first point that needs to be made in this final section is that Kurds do not talk about Turks as much as Turks talk about Kurds. Their narratives tend to refer to the army and the state, and describe their experiences with these organisations. Kurds do not see ordinary/civilian Turks as their enemy. As they repeatedly assert in their accounts, 'Our problem is with the state and the army, because we have suffered from their policies and practices' (Nazim, Kurdish, male, 36). Kurds have encounters and personal experiences with Turks in everyday life and have ideas and feelings about Turks, however they dedicate much less time to describing such experiences and encounters in their accounts than Turks do. They use fewer stereotypical

definitions and make fewer generalisations about Turks, having more awareness and being more distant from everyday nationalism thanks to their political consciousness.

Kurds are less likely to give general political accounts. While some Kurds are aware of ethnic ties and have a sense of being part of a Kurdish nation, others have neither the sense nor the emotional ties of such involvement. In any case, the determining factor is not being a political person, but the invisible anxiety that is embedded in their identities and seems to be a natural part of being Kurdish in Turkey. This does not mean that all Kurds avoid talking about Turks, but there is another factor that dominates in their accounts: the wish to share their personal experiences. They want to talk. They want to find some relief by giving voice to their experiences, and that is why most of the Kurdish participants cried during the course of their interviews. It was obvious that the interview was one of the rare occasions that they had to talk about their feelings and ideas, and they wanted to make the most of this chance by talking about themselves rather than about others.[39]

The experiences they narrated were mostly about soldiers and police officers, and focused on the subject of discrimination. They used the word 'Turk' as a synonym for the state, the army and the police, and this word substitution seemed to be a collective discursive practice that was passed down through the generations. However, it must be stated that they were aware of the necessity of distinguishing between terms:

> *"I first recognised that I am Kurdish, that I am not equal with Turks, when the soldiers came to our village. While they were passing through the creek that was in the middle of the village, they were riding us [literally climbing on their backs] (laughing). Can you believe that, like a monkey or a horse? After this, the feeling of being Kurdish and being vulnerable to every type of discrimination has worsened with other experiences in Ankara –experiences with the police and the municipality police officers. From these experiences I have with Turks, by which I mean the state, the army, the state is seen as something that discriminates against us. Nothing more than this!" (Yakup, Kurdish, male, 30)*

[39] See Chapter 4.

The only narrative strategy to defining Turks is to give responses to the common arguments about the negative images of the Kurds. By defining themselves, they attempt to prove that they are as bigoted or as rude as is believed. The young respondents in particular strictly refute this claim, stating that the real ignorance on the Turkish side. They make self-definitions vis-a-vis the Turks. Generally they claim that even though they are seen as a rude group, they have defended their traditions and have 'biased thoughts' due to their customs. As Narin states:

> *"I know most of our traditions seem weird, but that does not mean that we are primitive people. How can you define civilisation and modernisation? Yes, we are different from you, because we have different traditions." (Narin, Kurdish, female, 31)*

The other response is related to the *cehalet* argument, or lack of education, ignorance. Most of the participants claimed that the new generation is different to the older ones, and explain that the older generations are ignorant due to the exclusionary policies of the state that operated in the eastern part of the country for years. They highlight that this situation is ongoing, as some of the Kurds living in the west have had better opportunities and have increased their educational level. They emphasise the importance of political awareness, which in some respects is presented as being more salient than educational attainment. They are proud that Kurdish society has become politicised by the mass Kurdish movement and are 'aware of the reality of this country', which is not cared about by especially young Turkish people. As Narin states:

> *"Our mothers and fathers were kept uneducated; Turks who were born after the 1980s were kept politically ignorant. They do not know or care about the country." (Narin, Kurdish, female, 18)*

The most important theme embedded in the Kurdish accounts was the desire to prove their innocence, being an impulse in response to the accusation that all Kurds are terrorists. Although it is not such a common discourse, it would seem that the Kurds have become quite sensitive about it. When I asked 'Have you ever heard this argument personally?', they state that they do not need to have heard it directly:

> *"We already know this. They all see us as terrorists, even if we have never been to the east, even if we have served in that region as soldiers, even if we pay our taxes to this state. They believe we are all terrorists." (Aliye, Kurdish, female, 43)*

The account of Fatos, a 26 year-old Kurdish woman who lives and works in Ankara, included a sincere confession to prove her innocence:

> *"There was a message that was shared on Facebook. The brother of my friend shared it. It said that Kurds are terrorists. It was on my wall and I responded to him. I said that I am a Kurd living in this land. I am not a terrorist. I also work for this state, I also pay the taxes. He tried to explain by saying that 'I have a few more Kurdish friends like you, we get along well, we eat and drink together, I don't have any complaints about you'. Then don't generalise about the Kurds. We are not terrorists. In this case, say these things to the terrorists directly. I am a Kurd, but I am not a terrorist." (Filiz, Kurdish, female, 27)*

As this quote indicates, the self-defensive accounts of the Kurdish respondents refer to their personal experiences. As they define themselves vis-a-vis Turks, they try to draw a picture of the 'other' by describing their personal experiences with Turks. They explain their positions, their own experiences and how they are treated rather than assigning particular qualities to Turks or making generalisations about them. The stories of Dilan and Guliz are good examples of this approach:

> *"In the course of a class, I think it was philosophy class, a discussion occurred and a nationalist guy started to talk. He was insulting and humiliating the Kurds. I got nervous, my eyes even filled with tears. 'The people from Diyarbakir are not human', he said. I could not believe that. Can you imagine how they see the Kurds? If they had the chance to kill and bury all of the Kurds, they will be so happy. I could only say 'if you do not know anything about the issue, do not talk about it'. I am so annoyed at living in this country with these racist people." (Dilan, Kurdish, female, 18)*

> *"During a painting class, the teacher called one of the guys and said 'I will give you a duty'. I was enthusiastic to do it, but she did not give it to me. She took some pushi*[40] *out of her bag and told people to*

40 A kind of scarf worn traditionally by Kurds that is now popular also among Turkish youths as well. It is also an accessory of the PKK guerrilla uniform.

mangle all of the scarves. The entire class started to cut and mangle them, after which the teacher said that students who put on these scarves do not have the right to study here or at any school. I could not believe it. If you are treated like this, you will also go up to the mountains to be a guerrilla. After the class was over I talked to my philosophy teacher about it, and complained about the teacher to the head teacher. Then I thought that she is already around 40, I cannot change her mind. Even worse, they informed the families of the student who were wearing the scarves and reported that their boys and girls were terrorists. How can a mature, adult person do that? They are supposedly the educated of Turkey. For this reason, nothing can be better in Turkey, but I will stay here, I will not run away. If people leave, everything will be worse. I am studying to serve in my territory (south-eastern part), rather than making a lot of money. I will always work for my people." (Guliz, Kurdish, female, 17)

Rather than making distinct definitions of Turks, the Kurds make comparisons. By showing their collective positive attributes, they reveal the negative approach of the Turks. This is a mutual argument in which both sides believe that if their side does not act with patience, the situation will get worse. Turks believe that they are quite indulgent towards the Kurds, but believe that in turn they are aggressive and annoying in their demands. Kurds, on the other hand, believe that if common sense does not prevail in the territory, it will lead to a bloody war. Cevat's account is an example of this tendency:

"If the Kurds have no common sense about the issue. everything will be worse. Turks are so biased and single minded. I always hold myself back. I pretend not to have heard. For instance, some of them say to me 'why don't you bring Karayilan[41]*?' Like I arrested him. Think! It becomes worse day by day. Recently it became much worse due to the news of the funerals of martyrs in the media. I can hardly prevent myself from becoming a killer. They just make ridiculous judgements, such as "all the Kurds are responsible for the losses of soldiers". Just after this news, autonomy was declared, as you know, and we became suspects in the issue. They think they know you and automatically judge you, not the guerrillas fighting in the mountains. Then they apologise to me with the explanation that Cevat does not like them. They decide on my behalf. Sometimes I make comments as well. For instance, I say that you bury the villagers, but there are so many unidentified murders. Your army has been sold; all of these people were killed by them. We saw in the transcriptions of the transmitter*

41 Murat Karayilan second in command of the PKK after Abdullah Ocalan.

> *conversations, the soldiers asked for a helicopter but your army sent it one and a half hours later. Then you accuse the Kurds and the PKK. It is not fair. Go and ask your army these questions!" (Cevat, Kurdish, male, 34)*

As proof of their lack of a connection with the Kurdish movement, they tell stories about how they have also suffered for years from the PKK atrocities. The first thing they say is: 'We also serve in the army. We also wear the uniforms of the Turkish army. We have also been in armed clashes with guerrillas. Does it matter when you become a target for a PKK guerrilla whether you are Turkish or Kurdish?' (Yavuz, Kurdish, male, 26). Besides this common explanation, they speak of their own losses at the hands of the PKK guerrillas to show the extent to which they are also under threat, and maybe even more so. It is commonly thought that if you are Kurdish, you need to make your side visible:

> *"If you are not a supporter of the PKK you will be between two fires. My father had the biggest hotel in Siirt. They (the PKK) threatened him and he left the city. You have to be in one of these groups. Standing in the middle is not possible. There is no state there. Either you are with the moll/religious leaders of tarikat [a kind of religious organization], or you are closer to the PKK. If you stay between these two groups there is no chance of living there. They asked for money, and said that if you do not give, next time they would tear the place down. Either you will serve us, or you will leave. My father came home without hesitation: they did not give us a chance to live there." (Cevat, Kurdish, male, 34)*

While the Turkish respondents were concerned with making self-definitions and explaining the characteristics of the Kurdish identity, the Kurds defined themselves in a completely different way. They described themselves and the other distinct Kurdish communities (such as Alevi Kurds) through personal experiences without making generalisations about the Turks, although they did tend to generalise about the perceptions of Turks. There was common agreement that they are mistreated and discriminated against by Turks, and it did not seem to matter who committed such acts, because they believed that they could be mistreated by anyone, at any time. It can be argued that not specifying a group of people, but making an over-generalised explanation of the behaviours to which they are exposed is another form of over-generalisation that serves the same aims.

6.3. Conclusion

Personal narratives represent a great opportunity to show the different methods by which individuals draw upon daily politics accounts to produce and reproduce the "self" and "other. Gamson suggests that "categories such as race, ethnicity and gender etc. are important in their perception of politics, ordinary people tend to see the issues as embodying a 'we' and a 'they'." (1992: 84).

From this point of departure, this chapter described is a basic distinction between Kurdish and Turkish accounts in terms of how they make their definitions. Firstly, making definitions as a narrative strategy means more than its content. In other words, it does not function solely as a means of providing details to contextualise the stories and enrich the content. As a narrative strategy, it is about producing an acceptable identity image in common sense, and creating a subject position. The strategy of presenting a self-identity works in two ways, as a self-reflecting and self-defensive mechanism. In the Turkish accounts, self-definitions emerged as a form of self-expression, implying how true citizens are, and they did this by defining Kurds as 'bad, unwanted' citizens. In other words, in the Turkish accounts, the self-definitions and definitions of others were made for the purpose of self-reflection and accusation. In contrast, in the Kurdish narratives, both the self-definitions and the definitions of others worked as a self-defensive mechanism to show how Kurds differ in reality from the way in which they are perceived by Turks.

Defining the 'self' and the 'other' as components in the practice of ethnic identification is a daily practice among ordinary people. The means of ethnic identification become possible as a result of comparing the 'self' and the 'other'. For this very reason, the definitions made by the participants have a crucial role in the accounts of ethnicity and nationalism. If we see the narratives given by the participants as distinct stories in themselves, the 'strategy of denial' and 'strategy of defining the self and other' should be regarded as an introduction to the personal narratives. In the following chapter we will see the actors who are already defined as agents in the personal experiences of the participants. Through accounts based on

personal experiences, it will be possible to identify the ‘self’ and ‘other’ in the personal experiences.

7. Nationalism by Personal Stories

"The storyteller speaks, but the story teaches"
(Arthur Frank, Letting Stories Breath)

"People not only think about stories; far more consequentially, people think with stories. Or, stories give people their first system for thinking" (Frank, 2010, 47). Narrating personal experiences is a way of building ethnic identities. By telling their stories, individuals define themselves and ethnic others in various ways. By giving general political accounts, the respondents draw a big picture to explain the political situation from their perspectives, in which they and their communities, as well as others, are depicted.

As Gamson states, people differentiate between two ways of knowing: knowing something from personal experience and knowing something more abstractly, due to second-hand data. Within this hierarchy of knowledge that people construct, there is a tendency to privilege their own experiential knowledge (1992: 125), and although their account is based on personal experience, they tend to change the tone of their accounts. In other words, a general account of any political issue is likely to have different content to an account within the frame of a personal experience. In this regard, there would appear to be inconsistencies and conflicting arguments between a general account and an account based on personal experience. So people use different narrative strategies to fix and legitimise the conflicting points of their accounts. Sometimes they confess the inconsistency of their accounts, or they may take a step back and change their accounts. Sometimes they may even recognize the inconsistencies between their political ideas and personal experiences, but insist on the same idea and become more aggressive to reflect their identities. All of these strategies are prompted by the practice of "narrating".

As Tanil Bora (2006) asserts, besides well-known writers and journalists, ordinary Turks have started to employ more exclusive language, in which Kurds are portrayed as culturally backward, intrinsically incapable of adapting to the 'modern city life', naturally criminal, violent and separatist people (2006: 78). As discussed in

Chapter 1, through the conceptualisation of Saracoglu's (2009) 'exclusive recognition' we know that the dominant anti-Kurdish rhetoric emerged as a new pattern of Turkish nationalism within Turkish society over the last decades. As Saracoglu (2009) asserts, this new way of perceiving the Kurds cannot be regarded as a continuation of the state ideology that was imposed from above, but was based mostly on the daily encounters between ordinary Kurds and Turks in the Western cities of the country. In accordance with the statements of Bora and Saracoglu, the main arguments that emerge through the accounts are based on supposed negative traits of Kurds, such as their being ignorant, culturally backward and separatist.

This chapter is composed of two sections related to the way Turkish participants portray Kurds, and the narrative strategies they apply when doing so.

(i) The first section presents stories of contempt. Based on personal experiences, these narratives deal mainly with the supposed ignorance, rudeness and weakness of the character of the Kurds.

(ii) The second section analyses accounts of in which Kurds are accused of being criminal and separatist.

7.1. The Strategy of Contempt

In this section, I bring together the 'Narratives of Contempt', which mainly highlight the cultural differences between two groups, and the supposed intrinsic incapability of the Kurds to adopt to modern city life. The arguments discussed within this framework are supported by the essentialist thinking, which define an ethnic group as a racial entity with distinct insufficient racial and cultural features. In this regard it is possible to say that a significant amount of confusion exists between the respondents' perceptions of culture and racial features. Furthermore, these cultural features and differences that are considered as essential characteristic of the Kurds, are also perceived as free from influence of other macro determinants such as religious sects and economic structures. Kurds are depicted as passive actors who are unable to develop themselves due to their primitive characteristics. The three themes

that reflect the narratives of contempt and that are found awkward and funny by the Turkish respondents are (i) exaggeration, (ii) dehumanisation and (iii) humiliation

7.1.1. Contempt through Exaggeration and Dehumanisation

> *"They usually have three wives, especially those who live here. We cannot afford just one wife, (laughing), he has three wives. I think this is because of ignorance. Ignorant people have more children. It is same everywhere. They do not care about the time or place or where they do this thing [have sex]. This is the sign of their ignorance. Today in our country all contraception methods are known by all married women. Normal people have three children at most, and after three children they use contraception. The Kurds do not know anything." (Mehmet, Turkish, male, 32)*

The narrative of contempt employed through the accounts of the Turkish respondents is practiced using different narrative strategies, such as exaggeration and mocking. Even if it was not particularly a funny story, Turkish participants were making fun of the cultural beliefs and living styles of Kurds that were not familiar to themselves. The laughableness of the 'other', being regarded as extremely strange in all of its components, is a discursive element of discrimination and contempt. The mainstream media also applies a strategy of exaggeration to produce 'humour' by accentuating the differences of the 'other'. Participants in this study used the same technique when giving their accounts – presenting the other in terms of its radical differences through such strategies as exaggeration, repetition, comparison, accentuating awkwardness, etc.

The narrative of contempt is not only employed as a strategy of exaggeration and mocking, as while engaging in these strategies, the basic objective of the respondents is to dehumanise the Kurds.

> *"I want to give you an example about my Kurdish neighbour (laughing). One day I asked her how many children she had. She said, 17 or 20. She was not sure about the number. Even she does not remember. She is also quite old. This is like a Turkish movie (laughing). I said: "you are like Terminator. How could you give birth*

20 times?" She did not know this either. She said that one of the babies had died from an illness, and another had died after being sat on (laughing). Another one died from a lack of oxygen. I thought that she was joking. So I asked 'how many of them are alive' to which she replied that only seven were alive. I am not joking. Seriously! This is the funny part of the issue. We had a Kurdish caretaker friend here (in the workplace) who had 27 brothers and sisters and three mothers. Joking with another colleague of mine, we said 'do you remember all of them?' (laughing). He said that of course he knew all of them: 'They are my sisters and brothers. Even though we have different women, our dad is common, and all of my mums are equal in the eyes of my father" (laughing). (Nihan, Turkish, female, 43)

The supposed lack of moral and human values was a common subject in the accounts. Nihan, herself a mother, telling a story of another mother who lost her children in different ways, makes light of the issue, but rather than ridiculing to woman for the loss of her babies, the strangest thing for her is the detachment of the mother. She finds it awkward to talk about the losses of her children with any sign of any emotion, making it seem that the number of children makes the losses unimportant. This emotional detachment of the Kurdish woman makes the situation ridiculous for Nihan, resulting in a situation in which empathy or taking the reasons and tragic consequences seriously is not required. Ridiculing the issue removes the need to understand the roots and the destructive impact of the deaths on the mother and the family. Using the issue as the subject of a funny story creates the illusion that the players in the story, in this case, the mother, are inhuman. For Nihan, forgetting losses and not remembering how many children you have might be a source of great trauma in her own life, but are considered trivial for the Kurdish woman. This way of presentation represents the Kurdish woman as a person with lower moral and human values. In other words, this is a way of 'othering' through dehumanisation.

"I have a memory about Kurds. I did my military service in Agrı (a city in eastern Anatolia). Our security post was in the middle of the village and was surrounded by houses. Every day there were clashes and fighting in the village. It was around 2000 or 2001. After they had killed each other we just went there to collect the dead bodies. Even if they kill each other, we did not care about it; it was not my business. Kurds are so ignorant. They do not speak Turkish. I served in a prison at that time, and on one visiting day I told one man to join the queue. They were like animals; they don't even know what a queue is. They

> *just stand there when you ask them to queue. They only understand beating; after being blackjacked they queue properly". (Mehmet, Turkish, male, 32)*

In Mehmet's account, the strategy of dehumanisation appears in several forms, such as representing the Kurds as 'animals'. Cultural backwardness is regarded as a sign of barbarity, primitivism and a lack of ability to adopt to such practices of modern life as queuing. However, from another perspective, under such conditions the act of not queuing may easily be read as an act of defiance in situations in which Kurds are being ordered around by soldiers.

The accounts of the Turkish respondents repeatedly highlight the idea that Kurdish culture has nothing in common with the characteristics of a modern city life. Modern facilities and daily practicesare unfamiliar to the Kurds, and this is also considered to be a structural, natural and default characteristic of being a Kurd. Again, the essentialist way of thinking erases the differences within the referred "social values", and highlights the distinctions between the differences of the 'others'. In other words, defining the 'other' necessitates a *homogeneous* 'we' and 'us' conception first. While ignoring the differences in the 'us/we' category, then it becomes impossible to ignore the distinct features of the homogeneous 'other', which is a laughable entity.

> *"The Kurds migrate that here from the eastern cities due to the evacuation and burning of their village. They are quite happy about living in western cities. I saw one of them; the man was homeless and was living on the beach. While he was talking to his cousin on the phone he said, "Brother, it is great here; it's like paradise. Let's move here." Can you believe that? He is living on the streets and sleeping on the beach and he calls his relatives to join him. This means that these conditions are really good for him. I could live at most for 3 days under the conditions in which he lives. Probably, I would lose my health. They should pry for the state to bring electricity to their villages. Their villages are that bad. Their best friends are the cows" (laughing loudly). (Volkan, Turkish, male, 36).*

7.1.2. Contempt through Underlining Cultural Differences and Humiliation

During our conversations, making comparisons in terms of the disparity between the standard of living, life expectancy and living conditions between Kurds and the 'self' emerged as another narrative strategy among the Turkish respondents. Turkish respondents did not consider the reasons why the standard of living of Turks and Kurds were unequal, and so rather than developing empathy towards the disadvantaged group, the poverty and unequal conditions of the Kurds were taken for granted. Considering misery as the default is also a way of maintaining the essentialist approach towards the Kurds. Taking for granted the notion of injustice between the two camps is makes invisible the broader structure of the society. This way of perception may "exaggerate the role of human actors, failing to understand broader structural constraints, and misdirect their anger at easy and inappropriate targets" (Gamson, 1992: 33).

While the Kurdish Question is considered a 'political issue' that does not affect the daily life or perceptions of the 'other', personal stories show that the practice of humiliation does not target the political practices of the individuals or the group. In other words, while the daily life aspect of the encounters supports that there is a "lack of conflict and problem" between the two groups; personal stories show that the perceptions of the Turkish respondents target the practices in private spheres of the Kurds rather than their political activities. While accepting the private life and the power relations as an embedded part of the daily interaction as "political" practices, it can also be said that the produced and reproduced critical narratives of contempt do not target only the Kurds. Despite the distinction between 'bad' and 'good' Kurds[42] functions to distinguish the assailable and unassailable Kurds at the discursive level, in personal stories the credibility and importance of the distinction of the bad/good Kurd fades away.

[42] See Chapter 6.

The grounds for criticism within a political sphere filter into the private sphere through narratives of personal experiences. As exemplified above, the 'supposed common features' of Kurds relate to contempt of traditional differences that are mostly related to family lives and general way of living, with reference to the number of children, marriages, interactions between family members, low standard of living, and so forth. Referring to traditional codes and even the consequences of the chronic poverty faced by Kurds are read as markers of their cultural and racial backwardness.

Within this perspective, 'intergroup marriages'[43] emerge as a distinct theme in narratives of contempt. Marriage is taken more seriously than other forms of interaction, such as being neighbours, sharing the same work place and so forth, as marriage means becoming relatives not only with the bride or groom, but also their extended family. Due to prevalent cultural codes, marriage does little to change the lives of couples, as coherence between the two families in terms of ethnicity, religion, religious sects, political identities, financial status, and so forth are regarded as quite vivid issues. According to this way of thinking, a lack of common cultural codes may lead to problems, and so marrying outside one's own community or is considered something to be avoided. This general way of thinking becomes even more critical when the possibility exists of marrying a Kurdish person.

> *"I had a friend. She was gorgeous. How can I say; she was as beautiful as Turkan Soray[44]. She married a Kurdish man. We met recently, and I could not believe the physical appearance of her. I was shocked. She had changed completely. I mean in negative way. I asked what had happened to her, and why she had changed that much? She said that if you marry a Kurdish person, you will change as well. She said: "You cannot believe how Kurdish people live. I was living in Gazi Mahallesi (close to the city centre). All of the Kurdish people who become ill or who came to Ankara before going to another place stayed at my house as guests. I really got bored with their culture." I could not believe just how much she had changed and how ugly she had become because of the Kurdish culture." (Neriman, Turkish, female, 54).*

[43] Intergroup marriages and relationships between Kurds and Turks also appeared as a distinct theme in the accounts of the Kurdish respondents. See Chapter 8.

44Turkan Soray (1945-) is a popular film actress in Turkey who has for many years been accepted as the most beautiful woman in Turkey.

Neriman's account reflects that cultural differences and their allegedly devastating effects are regarded as a significant issue when it comes to marriage. It is not possible, though, to read this account only on the basis of the cultural differences between partners. The subject of the narrative was not cultural difference, but rather Kurdish cultural backwardness. The tribal way of life which refers the Kurdish style living, referred to the pre-modern terms of human history the way it is used in common daily language. There is a common belief that besides the Kurds, all other ethnic groups, (and Gypsies) still maintain a primitive way of life. This includes living together with members of the extended family, keeping close relationships, having a large network that functions as a help and support community. This way of life is completely unfamiliar to members of individualistic nuclear families. It should be stated here that the differences between the two groups in terms of family structures and the means of interaction in both small and large families is not that different. Large extended families, including also the family members of one's partner, and taking care of relatives is a common cultural code for both Kurds and Turks. While the modernisation projects of the nation state have been launched mostly in the western part of the country, the 'modernised' living practices are accepted and practised by people living in urban areas more specifically and commonly. Furthermore, the urbanisation process has resulted in another mode of family life that is driven by economic and social structures. Both migration to urban areas and transitioning to the urban way of life are more recent practices for Kurds. In other words, the macro elements that dominate social structures and the modes of socialisation among the groups, and also the micro conditions that affect perceptions and practises make the differences of the Kurds more visible in the eyes of Turkish respondents.

> *"I have a friend, Hacer, who has good relations with Kurds. She is an activist and is close to Kurds politically as well, even attending their political party congress. She was divorced because of her political beliefs, which were opposite to those of her husband. I suggested her to marry again, maybe with a Kurd. I said: "Hacer, you like Kurds. You generally socialise with them. You also support their political base. I think that you should get marry with a Kurdish man." To which she replied: "I cannot live with them. Kurds are so oppressive. I cannot be comfortable with them. They are so introverted. They think that women should stay at home. I can have good friendships with*

them but, I do not want to marry one. Kurdish men are so oppressive." Can you believe that? Not even Hacer wants to marry a Kurdish man (laughing)." (Nermin, Turkish, female, 53)

All of the cultural codes emphasised by respondents may be read as traditional urban codes rather than a structural account of Kurdishness. However, as seen in Nermin's account, even a friend who is Turkish and has a good relationship with the Kurdish community due to her political affiliations does not have sufficient commonality to build a closer relationship such as marriage. Both Hacer's explanation and Nermin's mode of narration are based on a definition of the Kurdish way of life and family relations. Nermin's account highlights the structural incoherence of the two cultures, referring to hierarchically different levels. Even if all these cultural determinants are accepted as default attitude sets, what is accentuated here is that despite Hacer's close relationship with Kurds, coalescence is impossible. In other words, the desire to be an activist in the Kurdish movement as a Turkish individual, spending a great deal of time with Kurds, building a trusting relationship and taking risks for 'their' fight does not necessarily constitute enough of a reason to marry a Kurd.

"I want to tell another story about a friend with whom we work together here. She is a single woman in her 40s who has never been married. She said that she wanted to get married, and asked us if we had any friends we could introduce to her. I asked her for her criteria in men, and she said that she had only two, "First, I do not want to marry a Kurd, and second, I will never marry an Alevi." I was surprised, and asked, "Don't you care about anything like his age, his job, his education level? The woman said that these were the two most important things. She said, "Neither my family nor I would never ever accept a Kurd or an Alevi[45] *into our family." Her last sentence was really interesting. She said that she had waited for such a long time, and so why should she marry a Kurd? I am an Alevi, and so I asked her what she had against Alevis. She said that they are doing different things. I mean sexually. Something like group sex. I was shocked. I said that there are thousands of people who are sexually deviant, raping their daughters for years. Is this related with ethnicity and religion? What kind of thinking is it that this an Alevi practice. Men who do that are just sexual deviants." (Nihan, Turkish, female, 43)*

[45] See Chapter 1 for a discussion on Alevism and Kurdish Alevis in Turkey.

Marrying a Kurd is not the only taboo for Sunni-Turks. For Shafii Muslims, which makes up most of the Kurdish population in Turkey, marrying an Alevi is unthinkable. While the most prevalent 'other' among Turks is defined as Kurds, Alevis were cited as the greatest taboo among the Turkish respondents on the subject of marriage. When any question is asked about marriage, anti-Alevism rises from the grave. In terms of 'otherness', Kurds rank below Alevis; "If the subject is marriage, maybe I can let my daughter/son marry a Kurd; but I will never allow them to marry an Alevi". Such opinions were related several times during the interviews, and numerous stories were told about the conflict between Sunnis, Shafiis and Alevis.

7.2. Accusation by Personal Stories

7.2.1. Kurds are not disadvantaged; we are (Turks)!

The most important counter-narrative form reflected by the Turkish respondents was employed against the idea of the disadvantaged position of Kurds. Although this argument strictly rejected by the Turkish respondents, counter-narratives were common in the comparisons of Kurdish and Turkish citizens. The argument that Kurds are disadvantaged and are discriminated against was considered completely unfair by the Turkish respondents, with Turks who feel that they are in more advantaged position and obtaining greater benefits from the state than the Kurds. Motivated by their disagreement with the argument, they tell some personal stories to counter the arguments of the Kurdish respondent, saying that the Kurds actually hold a more advantageous position than Turks.

These arguments are based on the economic policies of the state that have been applied in the Kurdish region for 30 years in a bid to resolve the Kurdish Question. While the Kurdish issue has been regarded as dependent upon regional backwardness, varied economic strategies[46] have been applied in the Kurdish districts aiming to resolve the problems of poverty and unemployment. These have appeared alongside using repressive state apparatuses such as the army, the police,

[46] See Chapter 1.

the courts and prisons. Economic development is seen as the only way to resolve the unrest and slow the trend of politicisation among the public as a result of PKK propaganda throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Economic development targeted a number of large-scale state-sponsored economic investments in the Kurdish region through the 1980s and 1990s. However, throughout the 2000s the AK Party government took a different approach to the Kurdish region. Rather than making huge economic investments, the government aimed to provide assistance poor individual Kurds through extensive social assistance projects such as free health care, conditional cash transfers, food stamps, housing, education and disability aid for the poor. (Yoruk & Ozsoy, 2013: 155)

These social assistance policies implemented by municipalities create the feeling among Turkish people of being discriminated against, and encourage a counter-narrative targeting the argument of 'being discriminated against' that is asserted by the Kurds. The ethnicity based charitable policies and implementations of the state do little to ease the economic poverty of the Kurds, while at the same time widening the gap between Kurds and Turks living in the same area. In the eyes of Turks, although Kurds obtain more state benefits than Turks due to their ethnicity, they still complain about poverty, inequality and oppression, and find cause to rebel. The Turks criticise the state for its positive discrimination of the Kurds, while blaming the Kurds for abusing these good-intentioned benefits. In this way it becomes easier to accuse the Kurds of hypocrisy and as having 'bad intentions'.

> *"Most of the students with scholarships come from eastern cities; the state provides them with some advantages. Look at the new civil servants they are mostly from eastern and south-eastern cities. This has caught our attention in recent years. For example, a new caretaker was appointed to our office last year who was from Sırnak, where he had graduated from one of the important universities. We said that you cannot do this job. He was a quite successful student and finished his education with a scholarship. He was over-qualified for that job, but he insisted and said that he needed the job. It was expected to serve as a caretaker, so boss expected different things which should be done by a caretaker such as cleaning etc. But he did not do. He said that I did not graduate from the university to serve another people in this way. He spoke in Kurdish, especially when he got angry. I could not understand his language. It was annoying. In*

> *their culture, a woman should not give orders to a man, and so he said that he would not take orders from a woman, as it would be unbearable for him. We explained the rules of the office to him, telling him that he had already accepted them. He refused, and we sent him to another department of the University. Afterwards, the people who worked with him in the other departments said all he did while he was at work was read. It is the same thing that the PDP is doing. What is it called? Hmmmm, yes, civil disobedience! We learned that he was sent from that office as well. When we were arguing about his job definition, he said that he was sent here, but that it did not mean that he would stay here forever. I mean, he came here with discriminatory ideas in his mind. His real intention was not to work here, but just to benefit from the financial opportunity of the state. He insisted in not working. He only thought about serving his people (the Kurds), not Turks, and that is why he avoided work. Although he was paid by the state, he saw the state as an enemy" (Nihan, Turkish, female, 43)*

As it is seen in Nihan's account, the main criticism relates to the perceived 'disadvantaged position of Kurds in society', refuted with the counter-argument of equality determined by the course of law for all citizens of the Turkish State. Turks tend to show that they aware about the positive discriminative policies of the state. Rather than criticising the state policies, it is the attitudes of the Kurds that they find worthy of criticism. They articulate into the state discourse and situate themselves on the side of the state easily. Just like the state, they also, as ordinary Turkish citizens, expect more comradeship and loyalty from the Kurds as return for their charity. It is important to stress that the inequalities created by the state are not criticised in terms of its policies, but rather the abusive attitude of the Kurds.

Assertions of inequality from Kurdish individuals are answered with a new counter-narrative form that suggests Kurds have more advantages than Turks as a result of their close networks, which function like large families. Besides the inequalities based on the implementations of the state in the form of positive discriminative policies, the Kurds also watch out for each other. Due to their strong regional and ethnic sense of belonging, Kurds are very quick to exclude others [Turks] from a situation to protect their compatriots. While Kurds refer to this form of interaction as a consequence and reaction to being displaced and being discriminated against, for Turks this is a structural component of being Kurd that excludes and creates inequalities in society. Ethnically based thinking makes the differences between

Kurds and Turks more salient and visible. The idea that 'Kurds always look after each other' is perceived and experienced as an exclusionary practice by Turks, and this is why they tell similar stories referring to the exclusive practices of the Kurds, such as preferring to hire a Kurd rather than a Turk for a job, easing bureaucracy for Kurds if one is in a powerful position in an institution, and so on.

> *"You know the coup of 1980 and people's stories about being held in custody. My second story is about this. I was one of the people who were sent to jail, but this was not about my connection with a movement or a party of individuals. [At the time] if you said that you were a leftist or rightist, you were taken into custody. Anyway, I was taken to the prison in Mamak,47 where there were a lot of women of different ethnicities and of different ages, ranging from 16–32 years old. We lived communally; everyone tried to support each other. That said, the Kurdish women were behaving exclusionary. They found each other and they started to socialise just within this Kurdish group. At the time I did not see the situation very clearly, but when I look back now I can see what was happening. Whenever I see green pepper and tomato I remember this story. We all ate the meals that were given by the prison administration. You did not have a choice. One day I was the guard, I was cleaning the corridors, you now regular things. There was a small room for isolation, you know. I will never forget it, I saw the Kurdish women in that room eating green peppers and tomatoes. It was impossible to find these vegetables in the middle of January. I felt so sorry. I have never told this story to anyone. Then I asked the women but they rejected. You know there was regular counting every day. We were beaten by the soldiers, but they were never beaten. They were always in the medical room or another place. We did not recognize it at the time. One of my friends from that time told me recently "One day we were run the gauntlet. Sultan [a Kurdish friend] said something to the soldier in Kurdish, and the soldier did not hit him". My friend asked me if I remembered this story, but I did not. But now I recognise that the doctor was Kurdish, and was always being called to the medical room. I really remember it now. They only looked after each other. If you are not one of them [Kurd] they just ignore you. This attitude of the Kurds is so annoying." (Neriman, Turkish, woman, 54)*

Stories are re-framed and reconstructed at different times and in different places as a result of the recent experiences of the individuals, as in the story of Neriman. Making a retrospective analysis, she remembers and reconstructs the experiences

47 A prison in Ankara that is commonly cited in stories of torture following the 1980 military coup.

from her current perspective. The recent 'self' has ethnic distinctions, and lived experiences about the 'other' that are different from the previous 'self', which most probably became visible after the emergence of Kurdish Question in the 1980s. As she stated after telling the story:

> *"We were all leftists; our only enemies were the fascists and the idealists (Ulkucu) at that time. We did not even recognise people's ethnic or religious differences". (Neriman, Turkish, woman, 54)*

It is worthy of note here just how the respondent remembers the event. Although she recalls the Kurdish women convicts eating green peppers she did not see the situation at the time as intentional exclusionary behaviour, but now she is certain about the bad intentions of the Kurdish women.

Another story of Neriman along the same lines as her previous stories, in which her memories reinforce the argument that 'Kurds are not discriminated against; on the contrary they have more advantages than us [Turks] in this country.' As a left-wing activist, Neriman is self-critical of her ideas, feelings and attitudes related to Kurds:

> *"Sometimes I really have to ask myself if the Kurds are really right in their struggle; but after these experiences I am sure that the Kurds do right at this conflict." (Neriman, Turkish, female, 54)*

The dilemma of having on one side ideas and feelings about the Kurds and the Kurdish movement, and on the other, leftist arguments about equality, freedom and democracy, force Neriman to seek reasonable explanations that will allow her to maintain a legitimate political stance without challenging her leftist ideals or political identity.

Similar stories from the Turkish respondents stress the 'irritating and annoying sense of a created image of "victim-hood" among the Kurds'. There is a belief in Turkish circles that the Kurds are not mistreated, although they maintain rhetoric of being oppressed, excluded and discriminated against. In opposition to this rhetoric is the counter-narrative that is formed to refute the argument by the Turkish respondents. Although there are various experiences narrated by the respondents, I prefer to

continue with the stories of Neriman to show in what ways different personal experiences are linked to each other.

> *"My other story about Kurds is about the time my mum was staying in hospital. I have some experiences about Kurds; if I did not, I would never talk in this way. It was earlier times when mum was on dialysis, around 1998. We were in Hacettepe Hospital, we went there as ordinary citizens, you know, looking for a bed, waiting for our turn; but as Kurds came in they found everything ready for them. The Deputy of Diyarbakir came and made the procedures easier for them. When you protested, they said that they had arranged everything before they came, saying that they had connections and benefited from them. We followed the rules as normal citizens, waiting in the queue to see the doctor, and suddenly the doctor said something in Kurdish and they went into his room before us. It made me angry. At that time I started to wonder if they were the minority or us". (Neriman, Turkish, woman, 54)*

Neriman's interview was somewhat different to the others. After explaining to her the general aims and the questions of the research, she began telling about her personal experiences as if she had prepared a text before the interview. She had quite structured and strict ideas about the Kurdish Question and went to great efforts to legitimise her political ideas with personal experiences. She stressed the importance of personal experiences in having 'a proper idea' about a political issue. Due to her political affiliations she had distinct categories in her mind in which the contradictions and ambiguities were invisible and the borders were quite clear. The arguments that 'Kurds are not discriminated against; on the contrary, their lives are easier than ours [Turks] in terms of the state benefits they receive and their Kurdish networks" are reproduced in her account, supported by her personal experiences. She did not question her own identity at all. Having already thought about the issue, she maintained her personal stance towards the Kurds and the Kurdish Question, but criticised her own ideas before giving the account. That is why she was quite sure about which experiences she would speak, in what way these stories were linked to each other and what these stories imply. All the themes in this section are already mentioned in her account.

Besides the perception that Kurds are a positively discriminated group in society, there is also a common belief that they do not fulfil the obligations associated with being a proper citizen. This is evaluated as a form of challenge to the state and to Turkish dominated society. As Adil stated 'they [Kurds] do not feel any sense of belonging to this country. That is why they always challenge the rules in any situation'. (Adil, Turkish, male, 51) As a result of personal encounters and varied interactions between Kurds and Turks in daily life, different narratives and counter-narratives are produced that reinforce the negative perceptions of each group about each other.

> *"The owners of the shops in this neighbourhood are Kurdish. I do not approve of how they do this job, as they do it without a licence and without paying tax. They earn money in this way. They sell "kokorec" [grilled sheep's intestines] and alcoholic drinks without licences. They always do these kinds of illegal things. If you try to prevent them, fights break out. I pay my taxes; I do all my paperwork for getting approval. As a normal citizen, it is my duty. I sell something for 5 [Turkish] liras, but he can sell it for just 3 liras because he does not pay anything to the state. They destroy the market. I can never accept this. They need to be educated." (Volkan, Turkish, male, 36)*

It is hard to conceptualise the themes that appeared in the different accounts into distinct categories, in that no narrative strategy, form or motive functions in one way, but rather articulates with the others. For example, the argument of cultural backwardness does not refer only the language of contempt, while in another story, these categories become a means of narrative accusation.

In this way, the theme of cultural backwardness that frames the perceptions of the Turks about Kurds emerges in different forms within the stories of accusation as well as contempt in the Turkish accounts. The lack of social conventions and modern cultural attitudes in the behaviours of Kurdish people are considered as indicators of cultural backwardness. Disobeying the rules and not following accepted ways of doing something are, in public opinion, regarded as forms of resistance to the practices of modern life, and as a show of strength against the rules of the society and state to which the "Kurds feel no sense of belonging". Such 'destructive' behaviours are also considered to be reactions to a Kurdish inferiority complex. As

Nihan asserted: 'They have some complexes … maybe a kind of inferiority complex. That is why they are so aggressive and opt to display their power on any occasion by ignoring the rules. They see themselves as superior and powerful, but I know that they are just pretending to be powerful and rebellious." (Nihan, Turkish, female, 43)

> *"On another day we were in the hospital, and again a group of Kurds entered the hospital garden. I think there was someone in the hospital who they wanted to see. They came in a big bus, which was full. I could not believe it; they arrived at hospital door and wanted to enter, but the security guards tried to explain why they could not visit the patient. Of course they did not listen to them. They hit the door all together and opened it. The patient was brought outside, and they left after they had seen the patient. We could never do this kind of thing; we would probably be taken into custody. They are not like us, if they decide to do something, they do it." (Neriman, Turkish, woman, 54)*

Besides the perception and representation of the Kurds as an 'uncivilized' and 'ignorant' ethnic group, there is also a tendency in Turkish society to see them as 'being criminal'.[48] This perception of criminality functions in two ways in the mind of the Turks. First, it leads to the association of the Kurds with terrorism. As Sezgin and Wall (2005) state, 'Kurds are depicted as being against the Turkish government, with never ending demands, or as criminals involved with the PKK' (2005: 790). The other and more common outcome is that the Kurds are considered the 'usual suspects' in the event of any criminal acts in society.

The rapid demographic transformation and rise of criminal opportunity in the big cities as a consequence, have infected the perceptions of ordinary Turks related to the Kurds. Throughout the interviews, this criminal perception of the Kurds emerged as a prominent theme, with the most striking example being given by Ozlem, a manicurist who has job in her brother's hairdressing salon for 15 years. Although her grandmothers were Kurdish, she insisted that they [she and her family] do not consider themselves to be Kurdish. Immediately after mentioning her Kurdish

[48] It is necessary to say that the incidence and distribution of crime rates in society is the subject of another study. In this research, focus is on the perception of crimes and the perceived 'criminals' in the society.

ancestors, she went to great efforts to persuade me about the Turkishness of her and her family. After discussing the 'subject of Kurdishness' to learn about her perception of the Kurds, I asked her if she had any Kurdish neighbours. Her answer was exemplary:

> *"There are no Kurds living in our neighbourhood, but we were attacked by paint thinner addicts one night while coming back from my brothers flat. We were about to die. They are so dangerous. But there are no Kurdish people that I am aware of." (Ozlem, Turkish, female, 36)*

As can be seen in the account of Ozlem, the 'Kurds' are stereotyped as high-profile criminals. Kurds are situated in a supposed criminal hierarchal scale as a homogeneous category. They do not represent the urban poor suffering from increasing poverty and exclusion but the "Kurds" who make their living through ill-gotten gains' (Saracoglu, 2009: 652). Saracoglu (2009) states that the so-called 'Kurdish mafia' notion has a prominent role in creation of the negative image of the Kurds' in the minds of Turks. Through their close networks and sense of solidarity, Kurds construct mafia-like structures to strengthen their position both in legal and illegal economic sectors. Already, existing struggle between some powers, which are seeking to gain the control of various economic sectors, has created an ethnicity based conflict.

The prosperity of the Kurds is regarded as a threat, and whether this wealth is gained through informal economic sectors or from family heritage, there is always the possibility in Turkish minds that financial assistance is being provided to the PKK. In other words, even if Kurds have enough money to maintain a high standard of living, it does not change their "backwardness".

> *"While I was working in a university dormitory as an officer there was a girl there who I liked so much. She was pretty and clever, but she had some psychological problems. I think she went mad from reading a lot. She was diagnosed with schizophrenia. One day I saw her carrying a duvet that had bloodstains on it. She brought the duvet in front of the door to room in the dormitory in which a male Kurdish student was staying. She came to me, and said that something had*

happened to her, that the guy who lived in that room had come to her room last night and raped her. He was of Kurdish origin, and did not care about women; he always humiliated the girls around him, and he always told that girl that she was mad. I was in a difficult situation, I needed to stay calm. I asked some questions to better understand the case. She said: "He came to me and suggested sexual intercourse. I did not accept. Then he said: 'You are crazy. You go to the forest on your own'. I pitied the girl, when she gets angry at people she goes to the Beytepe forest. I was worried about her. I warned her several times not to go there alone. "You are a girl (bayan), you should not go to such places alone." She went there especially when it was rainy. What impressed me the most was that she read the Koran in the dormitory; she said that the Koran made her feel good at night. We always talked about it."

"I talked to this guy to understand if the story was true, but he denied it and said that she was lying. While we were talking to the boy, the girl saw us and brought the duvet to show the bloodstains. She shouted, "You did this to me!" I took the girl to the health centre, and she kept saying: "He did it! He did it! He told me that nobody would believe me because you are crazy."

"The boy's family came; they were very wealthy. He was thrown out of the dormitory. She was diagnosed with schizophrenia. My manager asked me if I believed her or not. I really believed that girl. His family was so rich; he did not care about anything. They were Kurdish, and you know that these kinds of things are not that important for them. Then we heard that he had announced to everyone that he had slept with her. I witnessed their encounter in front of the library. She was crying and shouting at him, 'Firstly you denied everything, now you are telling everyone what you did!' This story was told on the basis of his Kurdishness. In the Kurdish districts, you know, women do not mean anything. There are no women there." (Nihan, Turkish, female, 43)

The story told by Nihan is a challenging one in terms of its tragic consequences. It was quite hard for her to tell the story, and it was also hard for me to listen. This was a rape story about a Kurdish man and a Turkish woman, but this lived experience was not just a story that happened between two people. It was observed and told by different people with different perspectives, as is the case with all stories. The important thing that should be accentuated is the perception of Nihan and her means of narrating of the story. While remembering the story as she was giving her account, she classified this story under the title of 'Kurds are not a disadvantaged group', and told different stories that contributed to the same argument, which is articulated with

the idea that ‘Kurds do not care about women.’ These two sub-headings function as contributory categories that feed each other mutually through personal accounts. The arguments were seen as a default fact, as was also stated by Nihan, “Kurds attribute no importance to women, so any crimes committed against women are not regarded as a crime by them.’

Not just the content of the stories, but also the order in which the experiences are narrated and the structural articulations between the stories give visible clues to the logical and ideological structures of the respondents. While this is a rape case that might be evaluated from the perspective of the oppression of women and as a gender-based clash of class, Nihan coded this story as an ethnic based incident. While talking about the cultural differences between Kurds and Turks, these kinds of criminal ‘attributes’ are depicted as Kurdish characteristics.

7.3. Conclusion

These two forms of perception of Kurds are considered as the main obstacles to interaction with Kurds in everyday life. It is crucial to highlight the rupture that exists between the content of general political narratives and those of a personal nature. In the stories and observations narrated during the interviews, it can be seen that various terms are produced by the Turks that stereotype and mock the Kurds. While Kurds are represented as equal citizens and as an ethnic group with a common history and religion in general political speeches, in narratives of personal experiences, the objects of the narratives become real Kurds. In other words, in general speeches, both negative and positive generalisations refer to an abstract group of people called Kurds, while narratives based on personal experiences tell stories about real, concrete individuals, who they encounter, live together with or observe.

In general political narratives care was taken by the respondents to remain ‘politically correct’, while personal experience narratives were produced with the strategy of contempt. While an essentialist race-based negative perceptions of Kurds

is employed in Turkish accounts, a different way of anti-Kurdish narrative' is also produced; through exaggerating and mocking with 'default characteristic' and 'culture' of Kurds, and thus rather through alienating to the real problems and inequalities between the two camps.

The anger and language of hate used when referring to the Kurds was reflected in various ways in the personal stories of the Turkish respondents. Identifying the Kurds as a culturally backward ethnic group who should be educated and civilized is clear evidence of how Turks see themselves as being in a superior position in a comparison of the these two groups – the 'Us' and 'Them'. This unequal positioning falls short of displaying an attitude of 'tolerance' towards the 'uneducated' and 'ignorant' groups, and works actually as a way of reflecting anger onto the Kurds by means of discursive elements of hate speech.

8. Personal Stories of Kurds: Discrimination and Resistance

Discrimination emerges as a practical reflection of nationalism and the feelings created by an ideology of nationalism. In adopting the ideology of nationalism, the majority group members obtain a tool with which to demonstrate their power in everyday life: discrimination. Unsurprisingly, the accounts of the Kurdish respondents are framed by the narrative strategy of discrimination.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the general framework conceptualizing the Kurdish Question in the accounts of the Turkish participants is based on a strategy of denial. When it comes to the issue of discrimination, the common reaction among Turks does not change, in that most of the Turkish participants tend to ignore arguments related to discrimination, and suggestions of inequality between Turks and Kurds. In response to this tendency, there is explicit approval of discrimination against Kurds in Turkish society in the accounts of the Kurdish participants, and in this respect it can be said that "being discriminated against" is taken as a self-evident fact by the Kurds. A number of different definitions of discrimination are made, and examples are given to reveal the "victimised position" of Kurds in society. The Kurdish respondents were quite eager to tell their personal stories of discrimination in many forms – in schools, in the workplace, in their neighbourhoods, during military service, in the street, and so forth. At this point, it is necessary to raise the question of why the participants are so willing to tell their stories of discrimination.

An attempt will be made to come up with an answer to this question during the field research, recognising that the Kurdish respondents were quite aware of the discrimination to which they are exposed, and that they have discursive tools to express their personal experiences in this respect. It can be easily understood that discrimination is an important topic in their everyday lives. Kurds have a broad repertoire of stories of discrimination based on their own experiences and the experiences of others in their network. Moreover, it can be said that the 30-year history of conflict is perceived and presented as a history of their discrimination. In

other words, the political and social mistreatments that Kurds experienced for years are defined as "discrimination. "Being discriminated against" by the Turkish state is considered to be the main grievance of the Kurdish movement. The results and outcomes of the conflict are also evaluated within the notion of "discrimination", which appears not only as the reason for the rise of the Kurdish movement, but also the result of the Kurdish Question in Turkey. As Verkuyten (2005) says in his study into the ways people account for ethnic discrimination, the sensitivity of the discrimination issue and its debate in everyday life is based on the related practices of blame and accusation (2005: 67).

As Saracoglu (2009) asserts "… it is not difficult to see that the split between Turkish state and the Kurdish nationalist projects further provokes and reinforces negative images of the Kurds and Kurdishness in the circle of everyday life". (2009: 653). The stereotypical representations of the Kurds in the media and in public speech were reinforced by a new media campaign that pointed to Kurds as potential sympathizers of the "separatist Kurdish movement" after the 2000s. During the 1990s, the dominant tendency was to differentiate between the Kurds and the PKK. Even the families of martyrs refrained from turning their anger towards the Kurds living in Western Turkish cities. Although this reflex is still continuing, the negative image of Kurds in the western part of the country has becomes familiar element in public thought. Though the deep-rooted rancour against the PKK did not turn into collective violence or racist attacks, suspicions of Kurds became more visible, rather than being based on personal encounters in the flow of everyday life. Through these dominant societal beliefs, prejudice and discriminative attitudes became prevalent in everyday life in different forms, while also bolstering the discriminative policies of the state.

In this respect, the first thing that should be stated is that the different stories and experiences referring to the notion of discrimination cannot be discussed without reference to the concept of resistance. Classifying minority and majority group members as two distinct groups in a research as active and passive elements in an encounter has always had the potential of reproducing discrimination in itself.

During the interviews, several stories of discrimination were followed by stories of resistance to show how the individual coped with discrimination. Resistance and discrimination are like two sides of the same coin – it is not possible to relate a story of discrimination without referring to the notion of "resistance", and vice versa. Making visible the everyday resistance practices of individuals is a hard task because of its veiled feature as Gamson states "everyday forms of resistance involve evasion, deception, and subtle sabotage rather than rebellious collective action" (Gamson, 1992: 61).

I argue that neither a distinct/majority group who discriminate nor the group that are being discriminated against are homogeneous and passive receivers of these acts. For this reason, it is necessary to show the heterogeneity of both groups by revealing the ruptured and exceptional attitudes of the majority group members and the acts of resistance of the members of the minority group. In this way it is possible to hear also the stories of resistance of the respondents when their discrimination stories are told.

The purpose of this chapter is to challenge researchers to move beyond studying Kurds and racial prejudice as passive targets, and move towards studying them as functioning individuals who are able to influence the intergroup dynamics of Kurds and Turks. The distinction between discrimination by the state (referring to police and soldiers) and discrimination by ordinary Turks appears as a distinct factor in many accounts. In the interviews, two groups were defined in the stories of discrimination: first, "police and soldiers", referred to as "the state" in accounts, and second, ordinary "Turks". At this point it can be said that feelings of being victim of discrimination emerges as a narrative strategy in the accounts of the Kurdish respondents, although accounts referring to the various practices of resistance also articulate into the "narrative of being discriminated" against, while "narratives of resistance" emerge as a narrative strategy.

The stories of discrimination and resistance related by the Kurdish respondents may be classified into two streams.

i. Discrimination by the state and the system. In this matter, the respondents most frequently in their interviews told stories about ID checks. The argument that the "state discriminates against Kurds" is supported by stories about police and soldiers, the lack of opportunity to gain official and qualified jobs, schools, workplaces and military service.

ii. Stories of discrimination and resistance in everyday life; in other words, discrimination by ordinary Turks. The argument that "Kurds are discriminated against in their daily lives by Turks" is supported and exemplified in stories about flat rental, marriage, friendship and experiences in some entertainment venues[49].

8.1. Discrimination by the State

8.1.1. Discrimination Rituals of "Police and Soldier": ID Controls

ID checks were a daily routine all over the country during the "state of emergency" in the 1990s, but especially in eastern and south-eastern areas. At the time of the most frequent clashes between PKK and the Turkish army, comprehensive ID checks were made on both urban and inter-urban roads, with buses and cars stopped by police and soldiers. This became a daily ritual, as soldiers and police had authority to make such checks whenever they wanted. During the late 1970s and following the military coup of 12 September 1980, systematic and random ID checks were everyday events. Accordingly, as a particular personal experience, ID checks retain a significant place in the both collective and the personal memories of Kurds.

It could be said that political awareness and feelings of discrimination are directly proportional. Experiences of ID checks are seen as the most visible evidence of

[49] Social concepts, friendship, marriage, occupation etc. focussed on in this chapter remind the psychological testing scale of Emory S. Bogardus which tests the social distance through the social groups such as family, friendship, marriage, occupation and social spaces such as street, neighbourhood (Bougardus, 1926). However in this research the scale of Bogardus did not employed intentionally.

"being discriminated against" among the Kurdish respondents. When referring to the issue of discrimination, the respondents tended to tell stories involving the state, the police and soldiers, and the mistreatment that they faced in the past. Their memories of ID checks from the 80s and 90s are recalled as natural and self-evident parts of daily life. As Cemal stated: *"I remember being stopped by the police ten times in one day in Diyarbakır in the 90s. It was not a strange thing for us. Nobody complained about it." (Cemal, Kurdish, male, 68).* Likewise Mahmut states;

> *"I can give an example from last month. I was drinking something with one of my friends in a bar in Sakarya,*[50] *then we left. At the corner of the street was a group of police. All people were passing by them. I was a bit drunk and I said 'they will stop us when we pass'. One of them asked for our IDs. You know, our skin colour is a bit dark. We gave our IDs, and they made us wait there for fifteen minutes. The only reason they made us wait was our place of births. My friend and I are from Diyarbakır. If our birthplaces were different, I mean somewhere from the west, they would just check and give back the IDs. If the ID says Diyarbakır, Mardin, Hakkari or Siirt on the ID, they check the GBT*[51] *records. We are regarded as potential criminals." (Mahmut, Kurdish, male, 40)*

Fatmagul is a 48-year-old Kurdish civil servant, and is the daughter of a Kurdish soldier. She had grown up in a western town due to her father's job, but is unable to speak Kurdish, despite Kurdish being spoken at home, especially between her father and grandmother. She emphasized that Kemalist and leftist political thought were dominant in her family when describing her childhood. She describes herself as an "assimilated Kurd", and underlines that while she never experienced the Kurdish movement first hand, she is a sympathizer of the movement as a leftist-feminist activist. In the course of the interviews I did not ask directly whether she had any negative experiences with the Kurds/Turks, but asked rather when she first recognized her Kurdishness[52] She told me a long story about an ID card check that had first given her an idea of her ethnic identity, and also her first story of

50 "Sakarya" is a street in central Ankara that is known as a "street of bars and pubs".

51 Criminal Record Check

52 This question was asked only to the Kurdish participants. Another parallel question asked to Turks was, "When did you recognize the existence of people with different ethnic roots around you?"

discrimination. This long story presents to what extent personal encounters have an impact on perceptions and emotions of individuals.

> *"It was the first time that I realized I was Kurdish, rather than a Turk. It was a week after the 12 September coup; one of my friends had come from Bandırma, where we had grown up together, to register at the University. It was my second year at the university. Although she was Kurdish, her place of birth was shown as Balıkesir (a western county in Turkey) on her ID card. We were in a rush to complete her registration, as she was staying with her relatives for only a short time. I was staying in a dormitory. It was an extraordinary time, you know. Everyone was quite nervous, all the streets were empty. We were stopped by two police cars containing three civil policemen. My friend`s father was a soldier, like mine. They asked for our IDs and we showed our military IDs. They rejected them. They did not get out of the car, but instead talked through the car window. They said "obviously you are students", and asked for our IDs again. My birthplace is Diyarbakır, Siverek. They started to talk about my ID inside the car. They closed the windows. After that, they wanted us to give them our bags. In mine was a letter from a friend of mine who was a medical student in Diyarbakır, who had written about our political ideas as well as some childish talk. He gave me a detailed explanation of his political thoughts in that letter. They saw the letter and took me into the car. They asked me if I was 'Apocu' [a follower of Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the Kurdish movement and the PKK]. I was very scared. Then they asked me if I was Kurdish or Turkish? I felt terrible. I could say neither Turkish nor Kurdish (She cries). This story always made me so sad. I know that after all of the terrible things that have occurred this is not a big deal but ... I could not say anything. I could not respond to the question. They asked this question millions of times throughout the day. I was terrified, because people had been taken and never returned. We knew this. Nowhere was secure. They brought me to the Security Station, where on the fourth floor, everywhere was covered in blood. Screaming, tortured people were all around! They kept asking me while I was sitting in the corridor, 'Are you Kurdish or Turkish?' I got off lightly under these circumstances. Probably one of the police was leftist, and that was why they allowed me to go. If they were fascist, I would not be alive today. It was 10 am, they took me, and around 5pm they brought me to the dormitory. It was my first traumatic experience related to being Kurdish, and my first encounter with the state. During these hours they asked me only this question. Are you Kurdish or Turkish? I was unable to say anything. If I had said that I were Turkish it would be over, but I could not. It was so insulting. When they finally let me go they asked me the question last time. 'We will leave you alone, answer this question, are you a Kurdish or Turkish'. When I was leaving I said only, 'You have my ID, it is written there'. They could not make*

me say anything besides this. After this experience I was checked twice at all control points due to my birthplace which was written on my ID card. It is not so common anymore, but during the 90s in particular it was a regular practice. I told this story to my friends as well as my other ID control experiences, but they did not believe me. It was around the 2000s, one day we were together in a car and the gendarmes stopped us and asked for our IDs again. Only my ID was taken and my personal records were checked in detail. At this point they apologized for not believing me. They said that did not think it would be so obvious; but it was." (Fatmagul, Kurdish, female, 48)

It is obvious that being Kurdish and leftist at the same time puts one at a more disadvantaged level in front of the conservative and nationalist state of mind in Turkey. Both leftist political affiliation and Kurdish ethnic identity are marked as internal separatist forces. They are coded as disloyal who live among the obedient and true citizens of the country. Defining both groups as internal threats is regarded as an attempt to destroy the unity of the country in official ideology, producing a mind-set that marks both Kurds and the leftist groups as a target. State institutions share a common conservative, nationalist and anti-leftist ideology, even when based on Kemalism or neo-Islamism. The combination of *Fatmagul*'s identity as both Kurdish and leftist made her persona non-grata in her relationships with the state. Another encounter moment with the Turkish State is told by Yakup. He states that;

"When we came in Ankara, I can say that we did not have any problem with the people, but our relationship with the police was horrible. One day I got beaten up (by the police) because I was a Kurd. Last year, on 24 July at 4.30 pm I was passing by Seyran Police Station. The police stopped me and asked me to fill out a form. I am a student of "Justice" in the Open Education (Acık Ogretim Fakultesi[53]*), and so I am aware my rights as a citizen. I said that I have a right to see the document, but they told me not to talk much and to give them my ID. I gave them the ID and said again that I wanted to see the form first. After saying this, I was shocked. I was beaten up for half an hour. They were also swearing. They did this in the police station. I sued them. I cannot say more as the case is continuing."(Yakup, Kurdish, male, 30)*

The relationships with the police were stressed quite often in the accounts of Kurdish participants. While most of the stories were related to show how they and Kurds in

53 A distance-learning university education programme run by Anadolu University in Turkey.

general are discriminated against, some are told to show how they [the respondent] resisted discrimination. Yakup spoke about the normality of such kinds of discrimination among Kurdish people, asserting that:

> *"I do not think this story is worth telling; it is nothing; but this story is especially important for me because I can sue because of mistreatment of the police. This is not due to the positive transformations in the country. I can go to court today because I educated myself. I know my rights." (Yakup, Kurdish, male, 30)*

8.1.2. Discrimination in Employment and Lost Opportunities

Experiences of ID checks were just one example put forward by the participants as evidence of the discrimination to which they were exposed. Another common response to the question of discrimination, can be categorized into the inequalities experience in jobs, school, the workplace and military service. As Guliz asserts:

> *"We [Kurds] have become used to all types of discrimination in our lives. Me, my friends and the people around me always face this. We do not talk about these issues anymore; it is an internalized part of our life." (Guliz, Kurdish, woman, 17)*

Seeing discrimination as a self-evident and obvious part of life was a crucial motivation in the accounts as something that certainly happens. In other words, the Kurdish respondents did not challenge the existence of discrimination in society, and tended to tell their personal experiences to contribute the argument that Kurds are mistreated and discriminated against. Discrimination appears as an integral part of the collective and individual memory of the Kurds.

While personal discrimination is not downplayed, it is seen as a distinct part of group discrimination. In accounts of discrimination, Kurds are depicted as a "homogeneous victim group". Personal stories are considered to be separate examples of a comprehensive discrimination culture. Participants think that they are not important in those stories as individuals, and define themselves as passive

subjects in such accounts. They are sure that they are discriminated against due to their ethnicity, without reason.

> *"Guliz: Both of my elder brothers are shopkeepers. The younger one used to want to be a footballer, but he could not because he is a Kurd. There was another small problem; he is a little shorter than the demanded limit. But still he would be a goal keeper. His trainer said it to him openly that he would never be an important or famous player.*
> *Emel: Do you think this is because of his ethnicity?*
> *Guliz: I do. When his trainer said this it was a big disappointment for him. He was just eighteen. It was more sadness than a teenager can bear. Now he has some sort of mental disease, he is so depressed. All of these are an outcome of our ethnicity. If he was Turkish, maybe he would be a successful and rich footballer by now." (Guliz, female, Kurdish, 18)*

Inequalities in opportunities appeared as a distinct theme in the accounts. While the disappointments they felt during their lives may be attributed to different things, such as the competitive structure of the job market, personal inadequacies or some of the inequality producing systems that are so common in society (such as preferential treatment), the Kurdish respondents tended to explain the issue from the perspective of discrimination. It can be said that minority groups might be more inclined to feel discriminated against, insomuch as any disappointment related to life and the difficulties faced may bring about a feeling of discrimination. Rather than thinking about the other inadequacies that prevented her brother from becoming a football player, the primary reason for exclusion and his personal disappointment is, in her mind, the problem of ethnicity. All the other possible reasons are covered up, and both the perpetrator and the victim of the story are presented easily. We do not have any quantitative information about the Kurdish athletes in the football or in the other branches of sport. While the athletes are Kurdish they are not presented by their ethnicity or they do not prefer to introduce themselves by ethnicity. So the important issue here is not the presence or non-presence of Kurdish athletes in sport branches in reality, instead it is the strong belief at the side of the Kurdish participants that they will not be allowed to involve in such activities even though they want to.

In this research, the stories of ethnic discrimination experienced by the Kurdish respondents are not conceptualised only to reflect the suggested discrimination of

the state or ordinary Turks against Kurds, as it is also necessary to take into account the aspect of resistance, as the other half of stories of discrimination. In this sense, Aliye's story is one of both discrimination and resistance. Aliye has worked as a secretary in an NGO for 15 years, after coming to Ankara 20 years. She defines herself as a leftist, but without any direct affiliation. Aliye claims that she has always experienced different forms of discrimination in her life, but says that this story was particularly significant due to the negative effect it had on her future life:

> *"After I came to Ankara I started to look for a job, and at the same time I was preparing for the entry exams of the official institution. A job exam was announced by Gendarme General Command, and I applied for the position; but now I am thinking that maybe it would be better if I did not. Maybe it was a mistake, but I was looking for a job in the state sector to guarantee my future. There was a written exam in which I got quite high marks, and then it was required to enter another exam for the application. The applicants had to show to what extent they were able to use computer programmes, and I did quite well in this part as well. The final step was an interview. We waited for hours until 11 pm; finally it was my turn. I entered the room, but before I sat down, one of the examiners said, "Aliye is from Kars Digor". There was an awkward silence, and at that moment I understood that it was over. They would not accept me because of my ethnicity. They only asked me some trivial questions. Unsurprisingly, I did not get the job. It was a quite frustrating experience for me, and I was not happy. I wrote a letter to the highest person in Gendarme General Command of the time, I think it was Levent Ersoz, who is in the jail now accused of being a member of the Ergenekon[54] organization. After a while I received a response from him explaining that the result of the exam was completely unrelated with my ethnicity. The decision was made according to the applicants` exam results and so forth. Of course I did not believe that. I was not expecting a reasonable response from them, I just wanted to satisfy myself." (Aliye, Kurdish, female, 43)*

While Aliye received an answer to her letter about the inconvenience of her job interview, she was not convinced, but conveying the personal inconvenience and questions in her mind to the responsible people was a means of resistance. The story takes place in the 1990s, at the height of the conflict between the PKK and the army. According to her, to write a letter of complaint accusing the members of the examining board of discrimination and highlighting her Kurdish identity required

[54] See Chapter 1

courage. She remembers this story not only as a case of discrimination in her personal history, but also as the first moment she recognised her "difference", her "disadvantaged position" and her "Kurdishness". In other words, her first act of resistance was also the beginning of her political awareness. As can be seen in Aliye's story, experiences of discrimination are not only recounted to explain their encounters with discrimination, but also to show the sense of resistance and the instigation of personal political awareness.

8.1.3. As a Discrimination Space: School and University

The feeling of being discriminated against can be followed in the school experiences recounted by the Kurdish respondents. The lack of education has for 30 years been cited in official discourse as one of the main issues in the Kurdish Question, and the shortage of education facilities in the eastern part of the country is still a discussion topic in Turkey. One of the main narratives of Turkish nationalism is related to the inequality in education opportunities in the eastern and south-eastern cities. While schools and other education facilities are built there, the Kurds damage these to show their anger towards the state. Based on the experiences of the Turkish teachers that have served in that area, "Vandal Kurds" entered the narrative as an element of the "Terrorist Kurds" in Turkish nationalism. In patriarchal language, it is claimed that while state efforts to decrease inequality by investing in that area, building new schools and enhancing existing educational facilities, the Kurdish people do not want to be educated by the Turkish state, which is considered to be the enemy in the Kurdish society. In this regard, all the facilities and the investments of the state in their area are seen as targets that should be damaged in favour of the PKK. In the hottest period of the conflict in the 1990s, teachers and civil servants working in the Kurdish cities were killed by PKK guerrillas, bringing about the idea of the Vandal Kurds' rejection of the help of the Turkish state. This made it acceptable for some to accuse all Kurds living there as being terrorists and supporters of the PKK. However, it is also possible to hear the same stories from challenging perspectives as can be seen in the account of Narin:

> *"I have worked in a Kurdish village in Agri. The head teacher of the school was a nationalist man who hated Kurds, and who would voice his hatred on any occasion. The children felt that the head teacher also hated them. They [Kurds] already dislike the state and military, growing up with these ideas of hatred, and are so insulting to us. We were three teachers working there at that time, and the head teacher was always discriminating. There were some social assistance projects lead by the Ministry of Education for which it was required to make a list of the names of the children of poor families. He would refuse to make these lists, or if he would give 10 names for assistance. But he gave just five names. He did not believe our state should feed them. The people of the village understood these kinds of things, and that was why they started to damage the school." (Narin, Kurdish, female, 31)*

The Kurdish respondents, rather than relating only their own personal experiences of discrimination, often spoke about what they had observed or heard from others. Narin had a comfortable position working as a teacher in an eastern city that was close to her home town. Her personal sensitivities related to inequality and discrimination were strengthened after observing some particular events in that period. She also stressed the difference between her encounters with Turkish colleagues in a Turkish area and in a Kurdish dominated area. During the interview she tried to explain how she sometimes challenged her own identity and experienced difficulties in balancing her relationships with her nationalist Turkish colleagues.

Besides the stories about schools and inequality in education in the eastern region, some Kurdish participants also talked about their sense of being discriminated against even in the western part of the country. Attending the same schools, sharing the same facilities and being educated in the same classrooms do not give rise to feelings of equality most of the time among the Kurds, as Nazim explains:

> *"Kurdish university students struggle to complete their degrees just because of their ethnicity. My brother has not been able to graduate from the university for seven years. He still tries to be a mechanical engineer. Is he stupid? Is this the reason he could not graduate? We warned him about going to university, telling him to stay away from political issues, but what can he do? He is human. Even if he did not get involved with political groups in the university, still he has Kurdish*

> *friends. All Kurdish students are considered terrorists, especially in some of the fascist universities. He cannot pass his degree. We [Kurds] do military service, it is not a matter of discrimination. They [the state] do not say 'you are Kurdish, you do not need to complete your military service'. I pay my taxes, but there is discrimination in other areas." (Nazim, Kurdish, male, 36)*

According to Kurds, the anti-Kurdish perception affects their situation in the course of the encounters experienced in everyday life. As Kubra stated:

> *"I saw so many situations in which Kurds were discriminated against, provoked and excluded by the lecturers in our university. This is not fair. As a Turk, I feel annoyed on their behalf." (Kubra, Turkish, female, 22)*

In the interviews the Kurdish participants implied that one did not have to be a Kurdish activist to be discriminated against, excluded or to suffer prejudice, as having friends from Kurdish groups was enough. Based on the accounts of discrimination, it can be said that being a Kurd or having a relationship with Kurdish activist group members, despite having no political affiliation or Kurdish ethnic identity, are considered as a challenge for Turks. Such attitudes make the Kurds vulnerable to discrimination and exclusion, and at this point, different forms of resistance emerge within the stories of discrimination of the Kurdish respondents.

> *"At school I experienced a lot of bad things due to my ethnicity. My Turkish friends would talk easily about Kurds using swearing, and insulting and humiliating terms. I started to talk about Kurds when the subject was opened, just sharing my family's experiences. I see this as a kind of resistance, as I am only a high school student. Speaking is all I can do now. My teachers recognised me and my political transformation, and started to take an interest in me. One of them gave me high grades. My friends said that he [the teacher] behaved in this way in order for me to "grow" as an individual. When we have to write an essay for homework, I write about the Kurdish issue. I write well. All of the class listens to me when I read my essay. My teacher wants me to grow as a person. But he could not. He tried many things to form a connection with me, but he could not. He asked me tell him the books I read, but I did not want to have a close relationship with him because I do not want to be assimilated. I do not want to be a person as he thinks". (Guliz, Kurdish, female, 17)*

Being suspicious of the attitudes of majority group members was another form of reaction among the Kurdish participants. Trying to gain the trust of young Kurdish people and protect them from harmful and illegal separatist ideas was another narrative form in Turkish nationalism. The belief that Kurds are passive figures that are vulnerable to being cheated leads some Turks to believe they have a mission to protect young Kurdish people. Encounters between passive and cheated Kurdish subjects and active Turkish objects, equipped with the mission of protection and salvation, creates another form of resistance on the Kurdish side. Any "remedial" reactions of Turkish individuals in this regard are seen as the latest practices in the assimilationist policies of the state, and are strictly rejected.

8.2. Discrimination and Resistance in Everyday Life

8.2.1. Encounters in the Neighbourhood

While being discriminated against by the state as a student in a public school, as a worker or civil servant in the public sector, and as a citizen in the streets by the police and gendarmerie, Kurdish people also claim that the state is not the only perpetrator of discrimination. In this regard, "ordinary Turks" also discriminate against them in their daily encounters, such as in the neighbourhood, in the issue of marriage, in friendships, and so forth.

While very few neighbourhood stories were told, the difficulties in "renting a flat" was one of the most common sources of discrimination in everyday life. A lack of interaction or only limited forms of interaction in the neighbourhoods make it apparent that Kurds are not wanted either as a tenant or a landlord in Turkish-dominated parts of the city. Living in the same apartment or in the same street as a Kurd is not a well-accepted situation for Turks. The Turkish respondents often mentioned in their accounts about how they avoided sharing apartments and neighbourhoods with Kurds and narrated their discussions with their Kurdish neighbours several times, besides any positive experiences. Cultural difference and criminalization of the Kurdish identity leaded up a common desire to avoid residing

alongside Kurds. Both the Turkish neighbours and the landlords of Kurds complain about the same things, such as the overcrowded Kurdish households, misuse of houses, the perception of Kurds as criminal, etc. In the event of a problem with a flat, such as unpaid rent, Turks avoid from the supposed harsh reactions of the Kurds. It should at this point be stated that Kurds are not the only the social group in the flat-rental market, as students, couples and those who want to live alone also opt for this form of accommodation. This is a kind of rule that functions in everyday life without questioning among landlords and tenants.

> *"I lived in Altındag*[55] *for ten years with my family; the landlady of the house was Turkish. We found the house with reference of my husband's aunt. The landlady did not want to rent us the house because we are Kurdish. She said that Kurds fight all the time, and she did not want to face with these kinds of problems. A year after we rented the house, her perception changed completely, and a mother-child relationship developed between us. I think when sharing increases, a transformation occurs in relations. They [Turks] are biased against Kurds, but Kurds are more conservative (in a moral and religious sense) and have strict rules about the life and honour. That is why they fight more often than Turks. I think that Turks feel themselves to be weak in front of the Kurds, and that is why they [Turks] avoid interacting with them." (Filiz, Kurdish, female, 27)*

Stories about problems in renting property were told by most of the Kurdish respondents. To overcome this problem they tend to live in the more Kurdish dominated neighbourhoods or look for Kurdish landlords. It may be seen as a minor problem; however the amount of time these stories took up in the accounts was clear evidence of the importance of the issue in the daily lives of Kurdish respondents. The most common theme in these stories was that the Kurds are aware of their perception in the eyes of the Turks, and that is why they tended to interact with Turkish groups as little as possible, so as to avoid negative encounters. In unavoidable situations, hiding one's ethnicity, presenting landlords with a *fait accompli* or forcing the landlords to rent the flat emerged as leading strategies. Selling or renting these

55 Altındag is a metropolitan district in Ankara that is located just outside the city centre and has long been home to the workers of the city. It remains as one of the poorer quarters of the capital, with a high rate of illiteracy. The hillside is covered with illegally-built shanty houses [gecekondu] that are home to low-income families. In these areas there are some municipal buildings, public housing, state housing for civil servants and lots of small workshops containing such businesses as car mechanics and other light mechanical work.

properties to Kurds appear as a political encounter moment in which various types of discrimination are produced.

Landlords are not seen as the only decision-maker in such exchanges; as neighbours often want to be able to influence the decision. If a landlord wants to rent a flat to a Kurd, student or couple, the decision may need the approval of the other residents. While this process cannot be generalised for all apartments, it can be said that this is widely accepted procedure in society.

> *"I had a detached house, and I sold the land to a building contractor to build an apartment. At that time we looked for a flat to rent. We found many flats that we wanted to rent, but the landlords did not want to give us them, as we are Kurdish. One day my wife viewed a flat, and before the landlord could ask our hometown, I mean our ethnicity, she grabbed the keys and signed the contract. After everything was done, he [landlord] asked where we were from, and she said told him we were from Haymana*[56]*. He immediately regretted (allowing us to sign the contract) and tried to get the keys back from us, but it was too late (laughing). He said that at the time a lot of people around him asked him how could let the house to Kurds. Our neighbours from the apartment also scolded him for letting the flat to a Kurdish family. Then we moved in. After several months they [neighbours] confessed this to us after seeing our humanity and kindness. They said: "Before you moved in, we thought that Kurds were immoral, unbalanced, abusive people, like cannibals. You cannot be Kurdish. You cannot be from Haymana." (Omer, Kurdish, male, 35)*

As can be seen in both of the examples above, the stories finish in the same way. The problem, the mode of narration and ending to the stories are quite similar. In these stories, three common points are stated:

i. We are discriminated against by ordinary Turks.
ii. We found the ways of dealing with this mistreatment.
iii. Any opportunity of interaction changes the perceptions of Turks about us [Kurds].

[56] Haymana is a district of Ankara in which the population is composed mostly of Kurds.

As a form of agency, the Kurds wanted to show their kindness, respect and humanity in these accounts. As was discussed in Chapter 6, as a narrative strategy, "self-defence" emerges as a means of self-definition and self-expression in the accounts of the Kurdish respondents. In this way, there is a desire to prove that Kurdish people are modern enough to live alongside Turks. Some positive stereotypical language forms, such as "Kurds are a hospitable and helpful community", were used by the Kurdish participants, and all these narrative strategies can be read as an attempt to gain an equal footing with Turks in residential areas.

Of the 20 Kurdish interviews within this research, only one commenced with a story of discrimination. In the account of Filiz (Kurdish, female, 27), it can be said that her general perception of the Kurdish Question is based on the notion of discrimination faced by the Kurds in everyday life. She initiated her account with a story that showed how Kurds cope with discrimination in their daily lives. Filiz's story refers to her struggle with her family to continue attending school and how she refused to get married at a young age. As she stated in her account:

> *"Resistance is so important to reach one's aims. I have lived through this in my personal life. I resisted my parents and managed to convince them in some ways. I reached my goals. If I had not done this, I would not be the person I am today. The Kurdish problem is the same thing, I suppose. Someone wants to suppress us, and we [Kurds] need to resist to reach our goals." (Filiz, Kurdish, female, 27)*

Neither Kurds, nor Turks are monolithic groups, and distinctions between the ethnicity group members in terms of their perceptions of discrimination vary. Besides dealing with the aspect of resistance, Filiz's story is of additional interest in that it reveals the differences among the Kurdish participants in terms of their perception of discrimination. While the idea of being discriminated against by ordinary Turks especially over the last decade, is accepted widely by the Kurdish participants, opposite ideas also emerge, such as in Filiz's story of discrimination.

> *"Before you ask me anything, I want to tell you a story about your research subject; but before telling the story I want to state that the negative reactions of people [non-Kurds] towards Kurds have decreased dramatically. When one said 'Kurd' five years ago, it was*

an unusual thing, but I think it is over now. When you say 'Kurd' now, it is to say that we are all human, living under the same flag in this country. The story I want to tell is related to what I am trying to explain. A woman was walking along the street while my mother was sweeping the ground in front of the house, eight years ago. She said to my mother, "Get away from there, dirty Kurdish woman". Can you believe this? Reactions towards the Kurds were like this in the past. A woman walking in your street was able to say this easily. Now these kinds of things, these biases, have decreased. People have been less aggressive for last three or four years." (Filiz, Kurdish, female, 27)

Kurdish respondents are divided over on the argument of decreasing the discriminative attitudes. To some Kurdish respondents the transforming policies related to the Kurdish Question and some political moves, such as the recent "Kurdish Opening" project of the government, have helped to remove the taboos related to the Kurdish Question in society. The new political flexibility has been reflected in the public sphere and has provided more flexible possibilities for interactions among individuals, in some areas. As Onur related in his account:

"Recently, we took a breath as Kurds. After the dark days of the 1990s, under this government the Kurds have obtained a more secure and equal situation in society again." (Kurdish, male, 55)

While the decreasing discrimination in society over the last 10 years was cited in the accounts of a few Kurdish participants, the opposite was still referred to more often in the interviews.

8.2.2. Discrimination in Men-Women Relationship: Love and Marriage

"Emel: What do you think about the "Kurdish Opening"? How does it affect daily life?
Yakup: When I first heard about the "Kurdish Opening" project, believe me, the first thing that came to my mind was falling in love. The only thing I thought about was there would no longer be war or discrimination. People will not die in the mountains or while doing military service any more. I felt a kind of excitement and happiness. Unfortunately, everything led to disappointment; but believe me, when the [Kurdish] Opening started to be discussed, I wanted to fall in love

and just run through the green grasses. There was excitement, emotion and hope." (Yakup, Kurdish, male, 30)

Nationalism as a founder ideology embedded in everyday life practices has a great impact on the relationship between men and women. In this sense, the differences between men and women in terms of ethnicity, religion and sect, and educational and financial equality appear to be the most important criteria. Even before the relationship become to the marriage level, only involving romantically with a person from a different ethnicity is seen as a potential problem by both the parents and the couples themselves. Avoiding a relationship with a person of different ethnicity is a common attitude in the society, although this control mechanism does not necessarily relate to the Kurdish Question and political distinctions between Kurds and Turks. The main reason here seems to be the differences in cultural codes and practices, and prejudices about Kurds that mostly dictate these structures in society, rather than political distinctions. While these cultural codes attempt to prevent relationships between Kurds and Turks, individuals find alternative ways to resist the collective rules in everyday life.

"Of course we have relationship with Turks. For example, I had a Turkish girlfriend. I cannot tell this story to anyone easily, but I want to tell it now. She was the daughter of a municipal police officer. Maybe it is really strange. Her family was rather fascist, so they did not like Kurds. We resisted for a while, but we could not find a solution. Our relationship lasted for one year. She would sometimes say something unwittingly that hurt or humiliated me, 'I wish you were not that, I wish you were not of that ethnicity or from that city'. She was not that mature, and maybe that is why she said these kinds of things. She was easily manipulated.
E: Did her family know about your relationship?
Y: Her mother knew, and that was why there was displeasure in the house. I had that kind of story. The most important thing was that she never knew that I was a paper gatherer. I did not say. While I was working in Kızılay (Ankara's most central district), I called her to learn where she was in order to avoid an encounter. I knew where she was, but wanted to know if she was thinking of coming to Kızılay (laughing). Maybe it was the longing of a paper gatherer. There was always a longing. To spend the weekends with the person you love. That kind of longing, you know. I always suffered with having to hide

my real situation from her, but I never revealed it. Maybe she still does not know.
E: How did you hide your job for a year?
Y: I was always checking where she was. I sorted it out somehow."
(Yakup, Kurdish, male, 30)

In Yakup's story it is clear that it was not his ethnicity that he kept hidden, but his job. He wanted to hide his poverty, not directly his ethnicity. Besides his job and low financial status in society, his ethnicity would also be an obstacle if the relationship came to the point of marriage. He always knew that this relationship would be prevented by his girlfriend's family. As he states: *"There was no happy ending for us. That is why I did not want to admit everything about myself."* He did not even resist or fight for his relationship, because he was already certain of the inequality. He saw this relationship as a dream. After the interview he kept talking about the relationship subject, and added that he felt like a thief when he was together with his Turkish girlfriend, feeling like somebody who has stolen something belong to him through lies. He was aware that he could never have her, not only because of the lies behind the relationship, but also because of the impossibilities faced in the relationship.

The codes of discrimination at work in society are regarded as self-evident and part of the natural structure of modern society in the minds of some of the Kurdish respondents. In some cases, such as in those related to relationships and marriage, the power of prejudice is accepted without question. The power of prejudice and discrimination in society has turned people into passive agents in their own stories in most situations.

Besides the hegemonic and determinant nature of cultural prejudices and discrimination, different methods in projecting one's self-identity are adopted by Kurdish people that also make them active agents in their own stories. Although effective prejudices are evident and are the basic reason behind the lack of interaction between Kurdish and Turkish men and women, the avoidance of inter-ethnic relationships is a kind of precaution taken by individuals in an attempt to protect themselves from disappointment and heart-break. Besides the conscious and

unconscious responses given by individuals as strategy of self-defence, relationships between men and women are also seen as a challenge and as a means of resistance in inter-ethnic relationships. As Dilan states:

> *"I had a nationalist [Turkish] boyfriend. When I recognised his true face, I broke up with him immediately. I did not understand his political ideas at first, but after watching news of a gunfight on television, he shared some fascist videos on Facebook as a protest against the Kurds. After saw this bullshit, I broke up with him without giving him an explanation. His Turkishness was not important for me, so long as he was not a fascist; I cannot be with a person who hates Kurds. I do not say that I do will not marry a Turkish man, there are a lot of Turkish people who defend the Kurdish movement, but if he is a fascist, no way. I cannot." (Dilan, Kurdish, female, 18)*

While Dilan was telling her story she was clearly enjoying being on the powerful side of the relationship as a member of the minority and disadvantaged group. She enjoyed taking this decision on her own, "without explanation". As a young and beautiful Kurdish woman, and as the object of desire in the relationship, she felt the power of being able to make the decision to punish the other side for his racist ideas. As she said after the *interview, "It felt like I had taken the revenge of the Kurdish girls upon Turkish guys who humiliate and exclude Kurds."* As a young politically aware woman with knowledge of the politics of the Kurdish issue, she was also proud of herself for being able to make this political decision without hesitation to avoid turning her back on her identity. It can be said that Kurds talk often about the advantages of being assertive in the course of discriminative encounters, as the satisfaction that they feel after an assertive response makes them feel more confident, despite the risk of possible conflict with the perpetrator. The obstacle Cevat faced in his marriage shows another aspect of the discrimination.

> *"I have problems in my marriage because of this ethnicity issue. My wife is from Bala,57 and her father says that her grandfathers came from Diyarbakır. He always repeats that they are also Kurd from one side, but my wife always denies it. She says she is a proper Turk and a Turkish nationalist. She won't accept being a Kurd. They think that being a Kurd is the same thing as being a second-class citizen. She*

57 Bala is a town and district of Ankara, 67 km south-east of the city. Bala is one of the two dominantly Kurdish districts of Ankara, the other being Haymana,

feels humiliated. She always says 'Damn Kurds!' This is the term she uses. When I remind her that I am Kurdish, she says 'I do not mean you.' I cannot believe it. I am a Kurd, and she is also a Kurd, even if she denies it. Before we got married, this issue was not a problem between us. When watching news about dead soldiers and Kurds in the war, I get sad. I do not understand why she gets that angry about Kurds. When I listen to Grup Yorum[58] *while driving, she gets mad. She says that the lyrics of the song say 'come to mountains. She says: 'Why do you listen this music? Are you a PKK guerrilla?' She hates Ahmet Kaya.*[59] *She has no idea about politics. The only politics she knows is that Kurd means PKK. She believes that Kurds want to separate our country, and that we have to send them out of the country. All these expressions are so annoying. Not even my wife respects my ethnicity." (Cevat, Kurdish, male, 34)*

Cevat's annoyance at the political ideas and feelings about Kurds has different dimensions and dilemmas: Firstly, his wife's denial of her ethnicity and her assertive attitudes towards Kurdish people is a result of the assimilation policies of the state. He believes that 90 years of assimilation have promoted a negative and backward image of the Kurds in society caused the denial of Kurdishness as an ethnic identity by some Kurds, especially those who were born and grew up in western cities. He stresses that accepting and practising the Kurdish identity is seen as something of which one should be ashamed. Secondly, he stressed that he knows a lot of people in his personal environment that hide and deny their Kurdishness to avoid feelings of second-class citizenship. For Cevat, the hiding or denial of Kurdishness is not the result of direct discrimination towards Kurds in society. The image and low-status associated with Kurdishness compels some Kurds to build an identity based on their denial of their roots, from where they practice an exaggerated form of Turkish

58 Grup Yorum (Yorum meaning "interpretation" or "comment" in Turkish) is a music group formed in 1985 that has released twenty albums since 1987. "Grup Yorum have been at the forefront of a genre known as protest music.

59 Ahmet Kaya (October 28, 1957– November 16, 2000) is a Kurdish singer who was known for his political protest music. During his career he recorded approximately 20 albums. Kaya has been among the singers blacklisted and banned for more than 25 years. "On 10 February 1999, the televised annual music awards ceremony, SHOW TV, at which he was to be named Musician of the Year, he spoke out about his Kurdish background and said "I composed a Kurdish song and I am looking for a brave producer and a brave TV channel to broadcast it. I know there are some among you." Upon hearing this statement, prominent Turkish musicians and celebrities of the time began throwing objects at Kaya, including forks and knives from the tables before them. He was protected from injury by a couple of friends and waiters. Soon after the event, Kaya was forced out of Turkey due to constant death threats and he died in Paris in 2000. (retrieved http://www.kurdishherald.com/issue/v002/001/article02.php)

nationalism. From Cevat's account, it can be said that having prejudiced ideas about Kurds, being a producer of these negative feelings and perpetrating discriminatory acts may be carried out also by Kurdish individuals.

8.2.3. Discriminatory Experiences in the Workplace

Just as discrimination is not produced only by members of the majority group, resistance is not a strategy of only the minority group. As mentioned in earlier chapters, Kurds tend to discriminate against Turks, especially in Kurdish dominated areas such as the local farmer's markets (bazaar) in Ankara. To stress this point, it may be helpful to remember the auto-critique of Nazim about the powerful position of the Kurds in the bazaars as a Kurdish salesman.

> *"We [Kurds] are powerful in all the bazaars in Ankara. If we do not allow it, Turks cannot work with us there. Sometimes I feel that we also discriminate against Turks; but we need to protect some fields in which we feel confident and powerful to protect ourselves." (Nazim, Kurdish, male, 36)*

In some stories it can be seen that the resistance of the Kurds is supported by some Turkish individuals, as in the story narrated by Cemal:

> *"In the past, I do not remember the name of the judge, but when I was working in the courthouse in Ankara he started a campaign for the Soldier Foundation (Mehmetcik), saying that everyone had to make a donation. I submitted a petition saying that I would not make a donation, and that these kinds of campaigns do not contribute to peace in this country. Only 40–50 people said they would not donate; all of them were from my department. When the petitions were checked, he [pay clerk] recognised that most of the petitions were given by people from the eastern or south-eastern parts of the country. He [pay clerk] went to the administrator judge and suggested to exile the owners of the petitions, but this was prevented by another judge who was Turkish. I lived through that kind of thing." (Cemal, Kurdish, male, 68)*

As Cevat, Aliye, Narin, Dilan and Filiz state in their accounts, when new armed clashes broke out between the PKK and the Turkish army, attitudes

towards Kurds changed, especially in the workplace. When the scene changes, the roles and the attitudes of the players may also change very easily. This situation can be defined as a hidden tension between the two sides, which may be invisible in calmer and more peaceful times, but have the potential to transform quickly into a threatening situation for the Kurds. So, friendship does not keep outside this tension from the interaction forms in the society.

8.2.4. Discrimination Forms in Friendships

As in other forms of interaction, the notion of friendship is also affected by the prejudices and discriminative norms that are prevalent in society. Although avoiding political discussion in private relationships is a widely accepted attitude in Turkey, the transformations seen in recent decades have made political identities more salient in everyday life. The roots of this distinction can be found in Turkey's political history, which is based on such as the Kemalist elites/populists, leftists/rightists, Alevis/Sunnis, socialists/nationalists, Kurds/Turks, Islamists, conservatives/secularists-leftists, and so forth.[60] All these distinctions find reflections in the ordinary practices of people in everyday life. In this dichotomous structure of daily life, people construct their lives within or out of the political frame. While rules heeding cultural norms may be the most comfortable position for an individual, taking these differentiated and closed forms of interaction for granted would be a naïve approach to understanding the dynamics of everyday life. People find different ways of reducing the importance of distinctions, or choose to ignore the differences on some occasions, such as in friendships. As long as political identity is not highlighted, an invisible agreement can work for both sides of the interaction. Such an agreement is based on the rule that ethnic and religious identities can be tolerated and ignored, as long as non-political identities are maintained. This rule works for both religious and ethnic identities, and any ethnic or religious identity manifestations are considered as attempts to break the rules of the agreement. The invisible agreement in society produces a two layered structure of interaction; the

[60] See Chapter 1

first being the form of interaction produced by the obedient group in the agreement who chooses to ignore and to engage by making invisible their own differences, and the second being the people who prefer to remain outside this agreement and socialise only in groups in which they can retain their identities.

> *"I worked in Bodrum*[61] *for a while. There was a visible bias towards the Kurds there, in that Bodrum is a centre of attraction for immigrants – not only migrating Kurds, but also a lot of English and British people. One day there was a dinner event in a gorgeous hotel that was organized by the school in which I work. I went with my husband. It was around spring. It was forbidden to smoke inside, and so my husband went outside with the husbands of my friends. My husband is a Turk and is a civil servant, one of the guys that went out with him was a police officer and another one was a municipality police officer. They talked about the Kurdish issue for a while. My husband told me later that they had seen some Kurdish guys working in the hotel and had started to swear at them. They said: "It is required to kill all of them. They have bad stock in their families." I was surprised when I heard this. I could not believe how they could say these kinds of racist things when they know my ethnicity. I talked to my friends about this issue, but after that I felt that they kept me away from their environment. They did not invite me to the meetings we used to have before. I think this is nationalism in bad sense." (Narin, Kurdish, female, 31)*

When striking up a friendship, expectations are kept low in terms of tolerance of ethnic and religious differences, but after forming an emotional and close friendship with an "other", expectations increase.

> *"I had a friend named Esra who was from Aydın. We lived together in Agrı for 3–4 years and worked in the same village. She hates Kurds, but she knew that I am a Kurd. So she did not explain her thoughts openly, but when she came to visit me here in Ankara, she was completely different. I introduced her to one of my friends, Osman, who is a Kurd from Agrı. We had dinner one night and she started to discuss the issue of Kurds with Osman. She repeated the same things that the state feeds them. We suffered a lot when we worked in Agrı. "They are paid for all their children, yet they still betray the state," these kinds of negative things. Finally she exasperated him [Osman]. He was so patient for a while; he just listened and he also started to talk. We [my husband and I] could not do anything. Both of them were*

[61] Bodrum is a district of Mugla on the south coast of Turkey.

our guests. We tried to change the subject, but Osman left. I was very sad. We lived for four years together in Agrı. We were so close, but the same person said those kinds of things. I broke off our relationship afterwards. After all those years I realised that she was a racist. I never talked to her again." (Narin, Kurdish, female, 31)

The rules of the invisible agreement function as a precaution and defence mechanism, allowing individuals to avoid negative and destructive consequences, but they do not work all the time. As can be seen in Narin's account, the content and the form of the friendship depends on the time and the place, and accordingly disappointment, damaged relationships, giving assertive responses and refusing to meet again were common themes in the narratives of the Kurdish respondents when discussing negative experiences with friends.

8.2.5. Discrimination in Entertainment Places: The Issue of Kurdish Music

Another topic that is often referred in the accounts is related to the respondents' experiences in public entertainment places, such as pubs and bars.[62]Based on these accounts, it can be claimed that there is a natural distinction between preferred entertainment places of the members of the two groups that is based on the music being played. In other words, language appears as a challenging area for the members of both groups. Although the Kurdish respondents shared dozens of personal experiences related to discrimination and prejudice, the stories told do not mention discrimination related to sex, gender identity or religious sect, other than that based on the language they speak.

[62] In 11 December, 2011 Gazi Bayır, a Kurdish man, was murdered in İzmir in a bar in which live music was being played. http://www.haber7.com/yorum/oku/819542/p2. In addition, on 28 December, 2011 a Turkish singer named Sarp Ozturk was murdered by Metin Baydar after he refused to sing a Kurdish song (http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/16557962.asp).

There are many bars and pubs in Ankara that are famous for their traditional music programs. While the repertoire of such live music performances include folk songs with different languages, such as Laz, Georgian, Hemshin, Persian and Arabic, the inclusion of Kurdish songs in the repertoire may cause discomfort to people with nationalist ideas. Although the languages of the different minority groups settled in Turkey are not seen as a cause for concern, speaking and singing in Kurdish in public places is regarded as a "separatist practice" in everyday life.

> *"I saw many times people being annoyed at hearing Kurdish music in bars. I saw people leave a bar if two Kurdish songs were played one after the other. There is a bar in Ankara that belongs to my friend from Diyarbakır; they always see these kinds of situations. I always go there. If Kurdish music is played, I stay, but if it is not, I leave, but I do not create a problem. I do not get annoyed when listening to Turkish music. I lived in Adana for a while. One of my woman friends invited me to drink something together one night. We went to a place; I do not remember the name now. A waiter came to our table and we started to chat. He asked where we were from. I said I am from Diyarbakır. He was from Mardin. I wanted to listen a Kurdish song, and there was live music that night. The waiter said that it is forbidden. I asked where the owner of the place was. He said he was from Diyarbakır, and I was surprised at how it could be forbidden if he was from Diyarbakır. I wanted to talk to the owner. I said to him, 'You are from Diyarbakır, you are Kurd, why do not you let us listen to Kurdish music?" He said that Kurdish music was not in much demand, to which I replied that I demand it. He let us listen to a Kurdish song, and then some people sitting at the next table asked to the singer to sing another song called "Turkiyem*[63]*" (My Turkey). Can you believe that? We do not even have the right to listen to a Kurdish song." (Mahmut, Kurdish, male, 40)*

Speaking and singing in Kurdish was officially banned[64] in Turkey from 1983 until 1991.[65] Although there is no restriction to speaking Kurdish in law, it is still regarded as an illegal/inconvenient act in the collective memory. Besides restrictions of the Kurdish language in law in the past, speaking and singing in Turkey is considered to

63 Original name of the song is "Olürüm Türkiyem" (I'd die for my Turkey), which is a song sung especially when waving off new soldiers at the bus stations.

64 While before and after this law regulations Kurdish was always seen as an illegal language till last periods of Ottoman Empire.

65 The issue of the bans and restriction of the Kurdish language will be discussed in the literature review chapter.

be a show of strength of Kurdish people, and disrespectful to the martyred soldiers of the war. Having the right to speak and sing in Kurdish publicly are regarded as an act of compensation to the Kurds, and so singing in Kurdish is read as a symbol of acquisition of the Kurdish movement:

> *"I went to Akcakoca with some friends for a two-day holiday. We met a friend who was living there who brought us to a hill place with a great sea view. We parked our cars there and started to drink beer. One of our friends turned on the car stereo; some folk songs (türkü in Turkish language) were playing. There were other groups there who were also drinking beer. After a while a Kurdish song played. We did not notice the reactions of the other groups, then one of the guys from the other group moved his car near to us. He turned on his own stereo, opened all of the doors of the car and turned the volume up to maximum. The song being played was 'Türkiyem'. We did not say anything, but apparently he wanted to show his reaction to the Kurdish music. We annoyed and left." (Cemal, Kurdish, male, 68)*

The subject of playing and listening to Kurdish music brought several different reactions from the Turkish respondents. While the varied assertive responses by Turkish people against Kurdish music are defined as a form of resistance by the Kurdish respondents, these acts cannot be defined as resistance. Alongside the common tendency of denial of Kurds, the Kurdish Question and the Kurdish language within Turkish society, these acts can be seen as another part of the strategy of denial. As discussed in Chapter 5, denial as a narrative strategy does not include only acts of denial and ignoring the issue, as denial can also take the form of threats, of turning the volume of Kurds down and ignoring all the critical and challenging ethnicity practices of Kurds, which emerge as the different approaches in the strategy of denial.

The story behind the song "Turkiyem" (My Turkey) is of symbolic importance in the collective memory in Turkey. The lyrics are full of praise to Turkey, but also reference the acts of torture in the coup periods of the 1980s. The song was sung to leftist prisoners by soldiers and police officers as a part of the torture process, which is why it has a tragic meaning in the collective memory. As a demonstration of the power of the state, and functioning as a threat to "separatists" and "terrorists", the

song is kept alive in the Turkish nationalist narrative. While in the coup period the song targeted leftists and communists, in the recent political environment it is used against Kurds.

The forms of discrimination and prejudice differ within society, just as the forms of resistance diversify in personal practices aimed at constructing the self-identity. Creative forms of resistance and the insistence of expression of one's identity are carried out by individuals, despite the potential prejudiced and exclusionary reactions. As Dilan told in her account, while she fell repressed due to her ethnicity, she insist to resist in the public space by using such accessories as bracelets and hairpins that carry the colours of Kurdish flag. The ringtone of her phone is a song by Aynur Dogan,[66] who is a popular Kurdish singer who sings in Kurdish. She claims that the hairpin in her hair and the bracelet round her wrist are symbols of her identity, which people try to oppress in this country.

8.3. Conclusion

Without questioning the factuality of the macro appearances of discrimination, it is necessary to underline the fact that Kurds maintain a feeling of being discriminated against. The intention in this study is not to check the validity of the experiences of the Kurds narrated in this study, but rather to answer the questions of how they experience their encounters with Turks, identifying the impacts of these experiences on how they interact with each other, and showing how the inferences based on these specific experiences function in the construction of their political/ethnic identities, as a more important aspect on which to focus.

This chapter has presented stories of discrimination by the Kurdish respondents, related to various spheres of everyday life. The chapter further analyses the stories of resistance against discriminatory, pejorative attitudes, practices and perceptions. According to Kurdish respondents, various types of discrimination are experienced.

66 Aynur Dogan (1975-…) is a Kurdish singer whose 2004 album was banned by a provincial court in Diyarbakir in 2005 on the grounds that the lyrics contained propaganda for an illegal organisation (retrieved in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aynur_Do%C4%9Fan).

The general argument put forward in the interviews is that Kurds, as a distinct ethnic group, are humiliated, excluded and tortured by the state [police, soldiers etc.] due to their ethnicity. Their relationships with the police are stressed quite often in their accounts. While most of the stories are narrated to show how they individually and Kurds in general are discriminated against, some are told to show how they [the participants] resist discrimination.

The distinction between discrimination by the state and discrimination by ordinary Turks made in the accounts of the Kurdish respondents is an important narrative strategy, allowing an understanding of how the notion of discrimination is perceived. As has been stated in earlier chapters, the general inconvenience suffered by the Kurdish respondents mostly refer to the institutionalized forms of systematic state discrimination and prejudice, while ordinary Turks were added to the list of perpetrators of discrimination after the 2000s. The various discrimination stories told against such backdrops as the school, workplace, neighbourhood, bars and cafes, in the streets, and also in matters of love, marriage and friendship are not regarded as only practices of discrimination. Through the personal accounts of the Kurdish participants, the resistance strategies they practice have become visible.

Conclusion

This thesis aims to understand how ordinary people see this ethnic conflict between the Kurds and Turks, how they define the "self" and the "other" in this encounter, and how they define their relationship with the ethnic other within this excessively nationalist-driven political atmosphere. It explores the ideology of nationalism through the personal narratives of ordinary people, allowing us to see the reflections and reproduction of nationalism from a bottom-up perspective.

Personal stories serve as tools in the reproduction of ideologies. In this respect, it may be argued that the ideology of nationalism, which provides a comprehensive view of life for individuals, should also be studied through personal narratives which are based on different resources such as media discourse, popular wisdom and personal experiences. Nationalism is not simply a macro national or international ideology that presents only macro definitions of the "ethnic others" and the "self" of a nation. It also affects the means of interaction between different ethnic groups at a micro level in everyday life.

The meta narratives related to nationalism that aim to unify all diversities are produced mostly at the point of foundation of nation states, however, as a result of encounters between others at both collective and personal levels, these narratives of nationalism(s) become transformed.

Meta narratives of nationalism are not perceived or practiced in the same way in the everyday lives of ordinary people, in that ordinary people interact with ethnic others in various ways, and make their own interpretation of the taken-for-granted meaning of nationalism. Personal and collective encounters with the 'ethnic other' in everyday life have a significant impact on ethnic identification, and the ways in which individuals practice nationalism in their own lives. Related to this, narratives produced about "self" and "other" at a personal level emerge as a means of production and reproduction of nationalism. While these personal narratives can be

articulated in line with the official meta-narratives of nationalism, they may also challenge these.

Narrative inquiry is employed as the methodological approach in this thesis, with the intention being to provide a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which the ideology of nationalism is produced, and the ways ethnicity is practiced. This is understood through the personal narratives of Kurds and Turks. As Hinchman and Hinchman state, "the narrative approach begins and ends with everyday life" (1997: xvi), with the experiences, encounters, speeches, purposes, expectations and longings of individuals expressed through their stories about themselves and others.

Narrative inquiry, as a methodological approach, provides flexibility during the interviews and throughout the process of analysis. It also engages epistemologically with the theoretical concepts that are employed throughout the thesis. The dilemma between the big/small stories and the ways personal narratives are employed to understand and explain collective issues are overcome by following Stanley's approach. This suggests that narrative inquiry is a result of the interpretational overview of the researcher, based on small scale stories (2008:436). Departing from this approach, defining the personal narratives as "political" and situating the individuals in a wider political space become possible, while the ways in which ethnic identities are practiced and narrated become visible.

Studies based on personal narratives have the potential to reveal certain forms of interaction and identity positioning, as well as the social conceptions of the ethnic identities of individuals. Following the narrative inquiry approach, this thesis examines the personal accounts and stories of individuals, with the intention of presenting the different forms of interaction and stories described by individuals. In doing so, it provides an understanding of nationalist beliefs, perceptions and practices based on the various forms of social encounters in which they are engaged. As Yuval-Davis (2006) states, "Identities are narratives, stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not)" (2006: 202). In nationalism studies, following a perspective that focuses on personal stories and

everyday experiences can provide a good understanding of how ordinary people see ethnicity and how they posit the "self" and "others" narratives. Through these narratives, and based on common and taken-for-granted forms of ideas, it becomes possible to reveal the overlooked or denied aspects of the subject. Collecting the taken-for-granted ideas that are structured in the ethnic identities about each other reveal counter narratives and points of resistance. In other words, the possibility to criticize the ways of self and the others' positions to challenge with the power relations occur when personal narratives do not match with the meta-narratives.

While there are obvious advantages to the narrative inquiry approach in research, based on two clashing ethnic identities, some limitations also appear. The first limitation is related to the collection of data, during which prompting the participants faces the sensitivity of the topic. The violent sanctions faced by Kurds over the last 30 years made them reluctant to voice their personal beliefs related to the Kurdish Question and the Turks, while for the Turkish respondents, talking about the Kurdish Question on a personal level was regarded as a producing way of the conflict in itself. These problems emerged during data collection, with some of interviewees declining to describe any personal experiences. The ambivalence between conducting interviews following a qualitative research method and carrying out fieldwork from the perspective of a narrative inquiry brought to light some other limitations in the early stages of the fieldwork in terms of the tools narrative inquiry provides, although the experiences gained in the field allowed these limitations to be overcome.

A Discussion on the Analysis

In this thesis the political and social contexts of Turkey are discussed with reference to the historical roots of the Kurdish Question, the emergence and development of the concept of Turkishness and the ideology of Turkish nationalism. Certain historical moments, more intense periods in the conflict between the PKK and Turkish state and the transformation of the Kurdish Question into an everyday issue are discussed. Focusing on the role of nationalism in everyday life through the

personal narratives of Kurds and Turks allowed the production of two narratives about the personal encounters of Kurdish and Turkish individuals in everyday life, although voiced using various narrative strategies. In the following section, these narratives and the narrative strategies will be discussed in order to answer the research questions of this research.

If one is to make a conclusive remark on the outcomes of this research, it is necessary to state that there is little opportunity for ordinary Kurds and Turks to interact on a personal basis, as they prefer not to socialise together within their daily lives. If they have already developed such a relationship with the "other", they do not hesitate to maintain it, but the members of neither group are keen to develop a close relationship with one another. Kurds prefer to socialise within their own networks in their private lives, and Turks do not generally want to interact with Kurds. An invisible barrier based on prejudices and biases prevents the majority of members of these two groups from forming a close bond.

The answer to the main question of this research "How do Turkish and Kurdish individuals perceive and define this ethnic conflict?" is obvious, in that the main narrative strategy that frames the personal experiences of Turks with Kurds is one of denial. That said, in summarising the features and functions of the narrative of denial it is necessary to answer the research question "How do the respondents construct personal accounts?" The answer to this question makes clear the common structure constructed by the respondents when giving their accounts. The interviews tended to be composed of two distinct parts: political speeches and political stories. Although this partition was not designed, either by me or the respondents, in the pilot process it was these two distinct themes that formed the structure of the accounts. The first parts, "talking politics" were composed of more vague political speeches based on media coverage of the Kurdish Question; while the second section, "telling stories", was based on the everyday experiences of participants themselves. So it is possible to say that personal narratives are structured by a macro evaluation of the issue by reference to the resources of media discourse and popular wisdom. The summaries of the ethnic conflict made the first part of the interviews more superficial than the second, which tended to include detailed evaluations. General political speeches

functioned as tools by which to frame the issue, specifying the political ideas of the individual by evoking dominant political clichés, slogans and common-sense references. In other words, the first part of the interviews was devoted to general political talk in daily language, and functioned as a means of framing the issue within the borders of the narrative of denial.

It is necessary to clarify the difference between the parts of the interview dedicated to "talking politics" and "telling stories" in terms of the intended targets. Within the accounts of the Turkish respondents, the target would appear to be a relatively ambivalent entity in the first part of the interviews. In other words, the "other" to Turkishness and Turkish nationalism is identified as "all of the Kurds" or some Kurds living in the east of the country, or, in contrast, the Kurds living in the west of the country. The Turkish respondents deny the existence of a conflict between Kurds and Turks by relating their positive experiences with Kurds whom they know personally. In this regard, the target becomes some (bad) Kurds that they do not know personally. This uncertainty of the target in the accounts of the Turkish respondents reveals the situational and unfixed nature of the perceptions of the Turkish respondents towards Kurds. While the Turkish respondents tended to define the Kurds with which they interact personally in a positive light, the ambivalence of the target should nevertheless remind us of how positive but "unfixed" perceptions of the "other" may gain an exclusive and racist character. This situation highlights the way in which the well-being of Kurdish individuals is linked directly to the tone of the political situation in the country. For the Kurdish respondents, however, both in the first and second parts of the interviews, the "other" is the Turkish State rather than ordinary Turks.

Denial of Official Recognition

One of the questions posed in this research aims to identify the narrative strategies employed by the respondents in their accounts. The accounts given by the Turkish respondents were built upon such strategies as exaggeration, humiliation, contempt, dehumanisation and accusation within a frame of narrative of denial.

In the context of Turkey, where a sharp ethnic divide has emerged in the last decades between Kurds and Turks, the perceptions of ordinary people and the ways they maintain their ethnic identities in this tense atmosphere is of great importance in understanding nationalism at a micro level. The armed conflict between the State and the PKK for the last three decades has not led to civil war, although perceptions of Kurds have diminished dramatically. By the 2000s, the Kurdish Question was high on the agenda in the western part of the country, among both Turkish and Kurdish populations. The forced migrations during the 1990s led to the rapid movement of Kurds to cities in the west of the country, making everyday encounters inevitable and intense. Although the Turks and Kurds had already formed a relationship in these western cities, the characteristics of their interaction changed the 2000s. While significant steps were taken to solve the Kurdish Question, the mutual perceptions of ordinary Kurds and Turks about each other have taken on a more negative tone. This paradoxical situation underpins the need to focus on personal interactions at a micro level through the personal narratives of individuals and their thoughts of the "other". Despite encounters in everyday life, at both abstract and concrete levels, the perspective of denial remains unchanged. While interactions between the Turkish and Kurdish populations have increased, the settled structure of the official ideology of denial continues to determine the perceptions of ordinary people. The current government, which has achieved great successes in all elections since 2002, launched a "peace process" to resolve the Kurdish Question. This "Kurdish/democratic expansion" project failed in garnering the support of the majority of society. In other words, while there have been attempts to open to a more positive meta-narrative regarding the Kurdish Question, the perceptions of the Turkish people have become all the more sharper. When the stakeholders in the discussion (i.e. the Kurds) are denied in a political sense, all of the encounters and the forms of interaction, as well as the means of defining the self and the others, are designated within this perception.

Denial functions as a block, preventing negotiation between the two groups. Despite the negative, humiliating, accusative and exclusive accounts based on personal

encounters with Kurds, Turkish respondents tend to deny the problems in communicating with Kurds during interviews. Any problematic encounters with Kurdish individuals are, in their minds, not related to the Kurdish Question. Rather, Turkish respondents narrate their interactions with Kurdish individuals with a denial of the impact of the negative and exclusionary perceptions of Kurds that has been created over the course of the thirty-year history of the conflict. Ironically, they continue to accuse and humiliate the Kurds based on their supposed ignorance, poverty and cultural practices. Defining the Kurds as terrorists and separatist in their attitudes, ideas and appearance also creates an ironic situation that challenges the narrative of denial. This dilemma is overcome by defining "bad and good Kurd". In this way Turkish respondents believe that the Kurds with whom they interact are mostly 'good' Kurds, while those who they do not know are 'bad'. They are thus able to depict themselves as well intentioned people with no prejudices, and in their narratives, the problems they face with Kurds are referred to as sporadic cases un-related to the settled narrative marking the Kurds as separatist, terrorist and uncivilised. That said, defining the problematic experiences they face as sporadic cases does not prevent them from making prejudiced generalisation. In this way, a paradoxical narrative appears in which the Kurdish Question is denied and in which bad Kurds are presented as responsible for the emergence of the Kurdish Question. As a result, it is possible to say that the narrative of denial serves to cover all negative perceptions of the Turkish respondents towards Kurds in a paradoxical and inconsistent way.

That said the transformation of the Kurdish Question from a taboo into a political problem that can be discussed openly in the social sphere, make possible to develop counter narratives. The tendency to create empathy with Kurds, who have been discriminated against by the State for the last 30 years, cannot be explained only from the policies of recent governments. The lack of information on the war in the eastern part of the country and the one-dimensional perspective presented through mainstream media delayed encounters of the Turkish people with the reality of the Kurdish Question. With the opportunities provided by the new media channels, it has become possible to keep informed about incidents in the Kurdish part of the country

and the personal experiences of Kurdish individuals. The sorrow experienced by the Kurds has begun to be shared through alternative media channels, such as documentaries and movies. Also scholarly studies into the Kurdish Question today present the destruction wreaked in the eastern part of the country. Media texts and works, both academic and non-academic, addressing the Kurdish Question have provided a more humanised aspect to Turkish eyes; however, personal encounters and the dissemination of alternative forms of representation of the Kurds have still been unable to change the settled perception of the Question. The resistance among Turkish respondents to recognise the Kurdish Question was based on the belief that it functions as a conformist political position, necessary to be considered as an approved citizen in the eyes of the State. The peace process has failed to expand the cultural and political rights of the Kurdish people and to change the negative perceptions of Turks towards Kurds. Any positive political steps taken by the government have yet to be applied in the field. This tendency makes political developments useless in the eyes of the Kurdish individuals, and negates any efforts aimed at building trust. In this regard, it would seem that the narrative of denial continues to be a persistent part of the political perception of the Kurdish Question.

Taking all of this into account, it was important to focus on the narrative of denial at a personal level. One of key contributions of this research is its focus on the justification of denial, and how Turkish participants underpin this in their personal accounts. Furthermore, counter narratives produced by both Kurdish and Turkish participants became visible, based mainly on criticisms of the suppressing of executions carried out throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The 1990s are widely recognised as the darkest era in Republican history for the Kurdish people living in the eastern part of the country. Awareness of the violent policies of the State throughout the 1980s and 1990s has made it possible to develop an empathy with the Kurdish citizens. In these counter narratives, rather than ordinary Kurdish individuals, it was State policies that were seen as being responsible for the emergence of the Kurdish Question.

As a Dependent Variable: The Narratives of Kurds

While this narrative of denial had a founding role in the personal accounts of both the Kurdish and Turkish respondents, the Kurdish respondents generated an additional narrative in the form of their personal ideas and experiences relating to the ethnic conflict. Recalling the research question that seeks to understand the narrative strategies employed by the respondents, it is possible to say that discrimination was the main feature in the narrative of the Kurdish accounts, manifesting as strategies of self-defence, accusation, resistance and silence.

The narrative strategy frames the personal experiences of the Kurdish respondents's with Turks was self-defence and challenging the biases about Kurds by their personal effort. For the most part, the target of the accounts, the actors they encountered, was not ordinary Turks but the Turkish State. These encounters were, on the whole, violent and harsh, and determined the narratives they created. Even those Kurds who have not personally experienced ethnic discrimination can produce a narrative of being discriminated against. There was a tendency among the Kurdish participants to refer to collective memory rather than their own personal experiences, and to conceptualise their own situations through this bitter memory.

For Kurdish respondents, both the collective and personal experiences with official agents of the Turkish State are shaped within the narrative of discrimination. Besides exceptional accounts, Kurdish participants tended not to make judgements about ordinary Turks. For many, it was during the humiliation of encounters with the State that they recognised themselves as discriminated against as Kurds. That said, in some accounts, it was not only the State that was held responsible, but also any Turk who supported the official denial policy of the State.

The Kurdish narratives are formed in response to the arguments developed through the State and media, as well as those put forward by ordinary Kurds about themselves. The stories, which express their desires, vulnerabilities and sorrow, function as tools of self-expression. They are aware of the negative perceptions held

by others about themselves and try to show how these perceptions change when in personal interactions with ordinary Turks. They also stress the importance of these interactions in an attempt to correct the negative image that prevails in the eyes of Turkish society. It is for this reason that they tell stories about the moments in which they succeeded in changing the negative perception of an individual or group in their daily lives. Showing hospitability and helpfulness predominates in their accounts.

Self-expression emerges as a supplementary part of the narrative strategy of self-expression, and can be read as a resistance strategy developed through their practices. The personal encounters with Turks are composed of two distinct phases. In the first phase they narrate how they faced a discriminatory attitude, while in the second phase they explain how they managed to reverse this negative perception. They are aware of how they are perceived by Turks and wish to change these perceptions. Occasions in which they manage to change a negative image in the eyes of Turkish individuals are treated as success stories. Efforts to express themselves can also be seen as a means of resistance. Kurds see success in this regard as being not only the establishment of communication with Turks, but also the launch of a challenge against the exclusive meta-narrative produced by the state and media about Kurds. They want to embarrass the prejudiced Turks. In this regard, any apologies from Turks for their previous behaviour are held up as proof of the success of their resistance.

The other acts of resistance of the Kurdish respondents that are developed and practiced in everyday life are narrated in a reactive tone, and include such acts as not refraining from speaking Kurdish in public, sharing messages referring to their ethnic identities through social media channels, wearing items that indicate their support of the Kurdish movement, ending friendships in which they feel they are discriminated against. In this way they resist the repressed nationalist ideology of Turkish nationalism.

Final Note

The period in which the field research of this thesis was conducted does not overlap with the Gezi Park protests in Turkey in 2013. However it is necessary to mention these events as a final note of this thesis. The Gezi Park protests started in June 2013 in Istanbul, launched as an act of resistance by a small group of environmental activists. Heavy-handed interventions by the police produced a sense of insurrection against the police, and relatedly, the government. Protests rapidly spread across the entire country with millions of people on the streets. For one month, hundreds occupied Gezi Park and established a communal settlement there. The treatment of protesters by the police across the entire country turned the initial protest into a mass anti-government action.

Importantly, the protests were not focussed on supporters of one distinct ideology, and united people with quite different political ideas. Besides the environmental activists were Kemalists (secular nationalists), Turkish nationalists, socialists, liberals, Kurds, Alevis, LGBTT individuals, anti-capitalist Muslims, feminists, students, housewives, and workers. While Kemalists protested the anti-secular social and political policies of the government to limit the secular way of life in terms of alcohol consumption, right to abortion, compulsory religious education in schools etc., the nationalists protested the security policies related to the Kurdish Question. Furthermore, Alevis and Kurds targeted policies limiting their cultural, social and political rights. The motivation behind the protest depended on the political standpoints of the protest groups and of individuals, but all were able to come together against the police.

Besides the unifying function of the protests, I wish to highlight one particular encounter here. During the protests, many who had never before encountered the violent face of the State saw this side of the government, just as Kurds, Alevis and Leftists had experienced previously. This was a historical moment, when ordinary Turkish people saw for the first time in their lives the harsh face of the State. The clashes in the streets were not reported on mainstream television channels or

newspapers and it was social media channels that were used as the main means of communication by the protestors. Across several months, Turks, Lazs, Circassians, Georgians and so forth experienced oppression and assault, forcing many to think about the situation of the Kurds who had endured such treatment for the last three decades. Protestors shared hundreds of tweets referring to the pain of the Kurds and their terrible experiences with the State and all that had been kept out of view for all those years. Many stated that this was the time when they recognised what Kurds had endured for so long.

During the protests, two kinds of encounters were experienced. The first one was the encounters of Turkish, Kurdish, Alevi, Kemalist, nationalist and feminist people with each other, while the second was the encounter of non-Kurdish individuals with the State. I believe that both of these encounters were a great opportunity to develop empathy between the members of the different camps. Not wanting to present an over-optimistic approach, I felt it necessary to stress the importance of these encounters, which may in some way contribute to possible peace between Kurds and Turks in Turkey. In following the developments related to the Kurdish Question since the Gezi Protests, it is apparent that attitudes towards the Kurds have seen no positive change at all, however the importance of a historical moment in the collective memory, in which a Kurd and a Kemalist are pictured walking hand-in-hand to escape the attacks of the police in Gezi Park, is something that cannot be overstated.

The yellow flag belongs to the Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), while the other is the flag of the Turkish Republic, modified with an image of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. This version of the flag has been the flag of choice of Kemalist groups in their meetings and protests for the last decade.

References

Abbas, V. (1998) 'The Kurds and Their 'Others': Fragmented Identity and Fragmented Politics', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East Fall, 18(*2), 82–95.

Abu Jaber, K. S. (1967) 'The Millet System in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire', *The Muslim World,* 57: 3, 212-223.

Anderson, B. (1983) *Imagined Communities,* London: New Left Books.

_____ (1991) *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso.

_____ (1994) *Imagined Communities*, London: New Left Books.

Andrews, M. (2004) Opening to the Original Contributions: Counter Narratives and the Power of to Oppose, in M. Bamberg, M. Andrews (eds.) *Considering Counter Narratives: Narrating, Resisting, Making Sense*, Amsterdam: John Benjamin Publishing Company.

Andrews, M. (2007) *Shaping History: Narratives of Political Change*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bacon, Edwin (2012) 'Public Political Narratives: Developing a Neglected Source through the Exploratory Case of Russia in the Putin-Medvedev Era', *Political Studies*, 60, 768-786.

Balci, A. and Jacoby, T. (2012) 'Guest Editors' Introduction: Debating the Ergenekon Counter Terrorism Investigation in Turkey', *Middle East Critique*, (December), 37–41.

Bamberg, M. and Andrews, M. (2004) *Considering Counter-Narratives: Narrating, Resisting, Making Sense*, John Benjamins Publishing Company: Amsterdam.

Barkey, H.J. and Fuller, G. E. (1997) Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities. *Middle East Journal, 51*(1), 59–79.

Barkey, H., J. and Fuller, G., E. (1998) *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, Rowman&Littlefield.

Barth, F. (1969) 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries', in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (eds.) *Ethnicity,* New York: Oxford University Press, 75-82.

Barthes, R. (1977) 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives', *Image-Music-Text,* translated by Stephen Heath, New York: Hill and Wang.

Bates, E. (2011) *Music in Turkey: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture,* Oxford University Press, USA.

Bayar, Y. (2014) 'In Pursuit of Homogeneity: The Lausanne Conference, Minorities and the Turkish Nation', *Nationalities Papers*, *42*(1), 108–125.

Bhabha, H. K. (1990) Nation and Narration, Burns & Oates.

Bilici, F. (1998) 'The Function of Alevi-Bektasi Theology in Modern Turkey', in T. Olsson, E. Ozdalga, C (eds.), *Alevi Identity: Cultural, Religious and Social Perspectives*, Raudvere Routlegde: USA.

Billig, M. (1995) *Banal Nationalism.* London: Sage.

_____ (2009) 'Reflecting on a Critical Engagement with Banal Nationalism - Reply to Skey', *The Sociological Review*, 57(2), 347–352.

Bogardus, E., S. (1926). ‘Social Distance in the City’, Proceedings and Publications of the American Sociological Society, 20, 40-46.

Bora, T. (1994) *Turkiye’de Milliyetcilik Soylemleri* [Nationalism Discourses in Turkey], *Birikim*, 67, 9-24.

_____(2003) “Nationalist Discourses in Turkey”, *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 102 (2/3): 433-51.

_____(2006) *Medeniyet Kaybi*, Istanbul: Iletisim.

Bora, T. and Can K. (2007*) Devlet, Ocak, Dergah: 12 Eylul’den 2000’lere Ulkucu Hareket* [State, Hearth, Dergah: Idealist Movement from September 12 to 2000s], Istanbul: Iletisim.

Bora, T. and Can K.(2004*) Devlet ve Kuzgun : 1990’lardan 2000’lere MHP. Istanbul*: Iletisim

Boratav, K. (1991) 1980'li Yıllarda Sosyal Sınıflar ve Bolusum [Social Classes and Distribution in 1980’s], Gercek Yayınevi: Istanbul.

Breuilly, J. (1994) *Nationalism and the State*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Breuilly, J. (1996) Approaches to Nationalism, in Balakrishnan (eds.), *Mapping the Nation*, London: Verso.

Brockheimer, J. and Carbough, D. (2001) *Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self, Culture,* Amsterdam: John Benjamin Publishing.

Brooks, P. (1984) *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*, New York: Knopf.

Brown, R. H. (1980) ‘The Position of the Narrative in Contemporary Society’, *New Literary History*, *11*(3), 545–550.

Brubaker, R. (1998) ‘Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism’, in J. A. Hall (eds.), *From the State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and Theory of Nationalism*, Cambridge Univ. Press: Cambridge.

Brubaker, R. (2004) ‘In the name of the Nation: Reflections on Nationalism and Patriotism’, *Citizenship Studies*, 8, 2, 115-127.

Brubaker, R., Feischmidth, M., Fox, J., Grancea, L. (2006) *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, Princeton University Press: USA.

Bruner, J. (1985) *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, Harvard University Press: Cambridge.

Cagaptay, S. (2004) ‘Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, *40*(3), 86–101.

Cagaptay, S. (2006) *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?*, Routledge: Abingdon.

Calhoun, C. (1993*) ‘Nationalism and Ethnicity’*, Annual Review of Sociology, 19(1), 211–239.

Chaney, D. (2002) *Cultural Change and Everyday Life*, Palgrave: Basingstoke.

Chase, S. E. (1996) ‘Personal Vulnerability and İnterpretive Authority in Narrative Research’, in Chatterjee, P (eds.), *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Ciplak, B. (2012) 'The Relationship between Migration and Crime in Istanbul, Turkey: Social Organization and Social Support in Practice' *IZU Social Science Journals*, 20–45.

Cirakman, A. (2011) 'Flags and Traitors: The advance of ethno-nationalism in the Turkish self-image', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 34(11), 1894–1913.

Clandinin, D.J. and Connelly, F.M. (2000) *Narrative Inquiry*, Jossey- Bass: San Francisco, CA.

Cohen, A. P. (1996) Personal Nationalism: A Scottish View of Some Rites, Rights, and Wrongs, *American Ethnologist*, 23(4), 802-815.

Condor, S. (2000) 'Pride and Prejudice: Identity Management English People's Talk About 'this Country'. *Discourse & Society*, (11), 175-205.

Connelly, F. M., and Clandinin, D. J. (2011) 'Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry'. *Educational Research, 19*(5), 2–14.

Conversi, D. (1995) 'Reassessing Current Theories of Nationalism: Nationalism as Boundary Maintenance and Creation', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 1(1), 73–85.

Conway, D. (2008) 'Masculinities and Narrating the Past: Experiences of Researching White Men Refused to Serve in the Apartheid Army', *Qualitative Research*, Vol.8 (3), 347–354.

Dawson, J. (2012) 'Nationalities Papers : The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity: The Ethnic and Non-ethnic Politics of Everyday Life in Bulgaria's Southern Borderland', *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, *40*(May), 473–489.

De Fina, A. and Georgakopoulou, A. (2008) 'Analysing Narratives as Practices', *Qualitative Research, 8*(3), 379–387.

De Fina, A. (2006) 'Group Identity, Narrative and Self-Representations', in De Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg *(eds.), Discourse and Identity*, Cambridge University Press: UK.

Delgado, R. (1995) Legal Storytelling: Storytelling for Oppositionists and Others: A plea for Narrative. In R. Delgado (eds.), *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge,* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 64-74.

Delgado, R., and Stefancic, J. (2001) *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction,* New York: New York University Press.

Deloye, Y. (2013) 'National Identity and Everyday Life', in Breuilly, J. (ed.) *The History of Nationalism*, UK, Oxford University Press.

Demirel, T. (2003) 'The Turkish Military's Decision to Intervene: 12 September 1980', *Armed Forces & Society, 29*(2), 253–280.

Deutsch, K. (1953) *Nationalism and Social Communication,* New York: MIT Press.

Dienstag, J.F. (1997) *'Dancing in Chains': Narrative and Memory in Political Theory*, Stantford: Stantford University Press.

Edensor, T. (2002) *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, New York: Berg.

Efe, I. & Yesiltas, M. (2012) 'Representations of the Ergenekon Case in Turkey, 2007-11: Today's Zaman and Hurriyet Daily News', *Middle East Critique*, 21(2), 187-201.

Eley, G. and Suny, R.G (1996) 'Introduction: From the Moment of Social History to the Work of Cultural Representation', in G. Eley and R. G. Suny (eds.), *Becoming National: A Reader*, New York and Oxford University Press, 3-38.

Elliott, J. (2008) 'The Narrative Potential of the British Birth Cohort Studies', *Qualitative Research*, 8(3), 411–421.

Ensaroglu, Y. and Kurban, D. (2008) *A Road Map for a Solution to the Kurdish Question: Policy Proposals from the Region for the Government*, TESEV.

Eriksen, T., H. (2010) *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*., London: Pluto Press.

Ergil, D. (2000) The Kurdish Question in Turkey. *Journal of Democracy*, *11*(3), 122–135.

Ergun, A., and Erdemir, A. (2009) 'Negotiating Insider and Outsider Identities in the Field: "Insider" in a Foreign Land; "Outsider" in One's Own Land'. *Field Methods, 22*(1), 16–38.

Ewick, P., and Silbey, S. (1995) Subversive Stories and Hegemonic Tales: Toward a Sociology of Narrative, *Law and Society Review*, *29*(2), 196–226.

Fox, J. E., and Miller-Idriss, C. (2008) 'Everyday Nationhood', *Ethnicities*, 8(4), 536-563.

Frank, A. (2010) *Letting Stories Breath*, USA: University of Chicago Press.

Gamson, W., A. (1992) *Talking Politics*, USA: Cambridge University Press.

Gellner, E. (1964) *Thought and Change*, USA: Chicago University of Chicago Press.

_____ (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell.

_____ (2008). ‘Ernest Gellner's Reply: Do Nations Have Navels', *Nations and Nationalism*, 2(3), 366-370.

Giddens, A. (1985) *The Nation-State and Violence*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gokalp, Z. (1968) *The Principles of Turkism*. Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill.

Gramsci, A. (1982) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Grosby, S. (2001) ‘Hobsbawm’s Theory of Nationalism’ in Leoussi, A. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, New Brunswick (N.J.): Transaction Publishers.

Guida, M. (2008) ‘The Sèvres Syndrome and ‘ Komplo’ Theories in the Islamist and Secular Press’, *Turkish Studies*, 9(1), 37–52.

Gurbey, G. (1990) ‘The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey since the 1989s’, in Robert Olson (ed.), *The Kurdish Movement in the 1990s: Its Impact on Turkey and Middle East*, USA: The University Press of Kentucky.

Hall, S. (1973). *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*. Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies.

Hammack, P., L. and Pilecki, A. (2012) ‘Narrative as a Root Metaphor for Political Psychology’, *Political Psychology*, 33(1), 75–103.

Harding, J. (2006) ‘Questioning the Subject in Biographical Interviewing’, *Sociological Research Online* 11(3).

Hinchman, L., P. and Hinchman S., K. (1997) ‘Introduction: Toward a Definition of Narrative’, in Hinchman, L., P. and Hinchman S., K. (eds.*) Memory, Identity,*

Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences, State University of New York Press: NY.

Hirschler, K. (2001) 'Defining the Nation : Kurdish Historiography in Turkey in the 1990s', *Middle Eastern Studies*, *37*(3), 145–166.

Hobsbawm, E. (1990) *Nations and Nationalism since 1870: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Icduygu, A. , Toktas, S., and Soner, B. A. (2008) 'The Politics of Population in a Nation-Building Process: Emigration of non-Muslims from Turkey', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *31*(2), 358–389.

Inan, A. (1947) *Türkiye Halkının Antropolojik Karakterleri ve Türkiye Tarihi*, [The Anthropolojical Characteristics of Turkish Society and the History of Turkey]. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.

Insel, A. (2002) 'Milliyetcilik ve Kalkınmacılık' [Nationalism and Developmentalism] in Bora, T. *et.al.* (eds.) *Encyclopedia of Political Thought in Modern Turkey* (4): *Nationalism*, Istanbul: Iletisim.

Jaffrelot, C. (2003) 'For a Theory of Nationalism', *Scpo.univ-paris1.fr*, *10*(June), 1–51.

Jean-Klein, I. (2001) 'Nationalism and Resistance: The Two Faces of Everyday Activism in Palestine During the Intifada', *Cultural Anthropology*, 16(1), 83-126.

Jenkins, R. (2001) 'Everyday Nationalism', in Leoussi, A. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, New Brunswick (N.J.): Transaction Publishers.

Jenkins, R. (2011) *Being Danish: Paradoxes of Identity in Everyday Life*, Museum Tusaulanum Press.

Josselson R. (1996). 'Ethics and Process', in the *Narrative Study of Lives*, 45-59. Thousan Oaks, CA: Sage.

Josselson, R., E. and Lieblich, A. (1993) *The Narrative Study of Lives*. London: Sage.

Kadioglu, A. (1996) 'The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity' *Middle Eastern Studies*, *32*(2), 177–193.

Kalaycıoglu, E. (2012) 'Kulturkampf in Turkey : The Constitutional Referendum of 12 September 2010', *South European* , *17*(1), 1–22.

Kaya, S. (2012) 'The Psychology of the Ergenekon Case: The Collapse of the Official Narrative in Turkey', *Middle East Critique*, 21(2), 145-156.

Kiely, R., Bechhofer, F., Stewart, R. & McCrone, D. (2001) 'The Markers and Rules of Scottish National Identity', *The Sociological Review*, 49(1), 33-35.

Kirisci, K. (2004) 'The Kurdish Question and Turkish Foreign Policy', *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy*, 278–279.

Kirisci, K. and G.M. Winrow (1997) *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-state Ethnic Conflict.* London: Frank Cass.

Koc, I., Hancioglu, A., and Cavlin, A. (2008) 'Demographic Differentials and Demographic Integration of Turkish and Kurdish Populations in Turkey', *Population Research and Policy Review*, *27*(4), 447–457.

Kohn, H. (1965) *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History*, Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand.

Kramer, L. (1997) ‘Historical Narratives and the Meaning of Nationalism’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 58(3), 525–545.

Kurban, D. (2013) ‘To Europe and Back: The Three Decades of Kurdish Struggle in Turkey’, *Policy Brief.*

Kushner, D. (1997) ‘Self-Perception and Identity in Contemporary Turkey’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, *32*(2), 219–233.

Kusow, A. M. (2003) ‘Beyond Indigenous Authenticity: Reflections on the Insider/Outsider Debate in Immigration Research’, *Symbolic Interaction*, *26*(4), 591–599.

Lazreg, M., (2008) *Torture and the Twilight of Empire: From Algiers to Baghdad.* Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ and Oxford.

Lewis, B. (1961) *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, London: Oxford University Press.

Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R. and Zolber, T. (1998) *Narrative Research: Reading, Analysis and Interpretation*. London: Sage.

Liu, J. H. & Laszlo, J. (2007). ‘A Narrative Theory of History and Identity: Social Identity, Social representations, Society and the Individual’, in G. Moloney and I. Walker (eds.), *Social Representations and Identity: Content, Process and Power*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 85-107.

Llobera, J. R. (2001) ‘Modernization Theories of Nationalism’ in Leoussi, A. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, New Brunswick (N.J.): Transaction Publishers.

Mann, M. (1992) ‘The Emergence of Modern European Nationalism’ in J. Hall and Jarvie, I. C. (eds.), *Transition to Modernity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mann, R., & Fenton, S. (2009) ‘The Personal Contexts of National Sentiments’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *35*(4), 517–534.

Maron, A. (2002) ‘As Australia Decolonizes: Indigenizing Settler Nationalism and the Challenges of Settler/ Indigenous Relations’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 25(6), 1013-1042.

McLeod, J. (1996) ‘Qualitative Approaches to Research in Counselling and Psychotheraphy: Issues and Challenges’, *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 24, 309-316.

McDowall, D. (2004) *A modern history of the Kurds*, London-New York: I. B. Tauris.

Merton, R. (1972) ‘Insiders and Outsiders: A chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge’ *American Journal of Sociology*, *78*(1), 9–47.

Miller-Idriss, C. (2006) ‘Everyday Understandings of Citizenship in Germany’, *Citizenship Studies*, 10(5), 541-570.

Montgomery, A., E. (2009) ‘The Making of the Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920’, *The Historical Journal*, *15*(04), 775-787.

Nairn, T. (1977) *The Break-up of Britain*, London: New Left Books.

Negt, O., Kluge, A. (1988) ‘The Public Sphere and Experience: Selections’, *October*, Vol.46, pp. 60-82.

Orhon, G. (2013) *The Weight of the Past : Memory and Turkey's 12 September Coup*, University of Essex. Unpublished PhD Dissertation.

Ozkirimli, U. (2000) *Theories of Nationalism - A Critical Introduction*, Hong Kong: Macmillan Press.

Ozkirimli, U (2008) *Turkiye'de Gayriresmi ve Populer Milliyetcilik* [Unofficial and Popular Nationalism in Turkey], in Bora, T. *et.al.* (eds.) *Encyclopedia of Political Thought in Modern Turkey* (4): *Nationalism*, Istanbul: Iletisim. 706- 717

Ozkirimli, U. & Sofos, S. A. (2008) *Tormented by History: Nationalism in Greece*, Colombia University Press: NY.

Ozkirimli, U., and Grosby, S. (2007) 'Nationalism Theory Debate: The Antiquity of Nations?', *Nations and Nationalism*, 13(3), 523–537.

Ozkirimli,U. and Yumul,A., (2000) 'Reproducing the Nation; Banal Nationalism in the Turkish Press', *Media, Culture and Society*, 22 (6): 787–804.

Oztan, G. (2007) 'Milliyetçilik: Resmi İdeolojinin Mütemmim Cüzü' [Nationalism "Inseparable part of Official Ideology,], *in Resmi İdeoloji Sözlüğü*, [Dictionary of Official Ideology"], (eds. Fikret Başkaya, Tolga Ersoy). İstanbul: Özgür Üniversite.

Pakkasvirta, J. (2013) Notes on the Theory of Nationalism, in H. Haggren, J. Rainio-Niemi, and J. Vauhkonen (eds.), *Multi-layered Historicity of the Present* , Helsinki: Unigrafia, 75–92.

Palmer, C. (1998) 'From Theory to Practice: Experiencing the Nation in Everyday Life', *Journal of Material Culture*, 3(2), 175-199.

Paterson, M. & Monroe K. R. (1998) 'Narrative in Political Science', *Annual Review of Political Science*, 1, 315-331.

Plummer, K. (2005) 'Critical Humanism and Queer Theory: Living with the Tensions' in Denzin N., K. and Yvonne L. (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research 3rd edition*, Sage: London.

Plummer, K. (2009) Foreword on Narrative Pluralism, in Hammack, P. L. and Cohler, B. J. (eds.), *In The Story of Sexual Identity: Narrative Perspectives on the Gay and Lesbian Life Course*, Oxford University Press: USA.

Polkinghorne, D., E. (1988) *Narrative Knowing and Human Sciences*, USA: State University of New York Press.

Polkinghorne, D., E. (2005) 'Narrative Configuration in Qualitative Analysis', in R. Miller (eds.), *Biographical Research Methods*,2, 69-99.

Poulton, H. (1997) *Top Hat, Grey Wolf, and Crescent: Turkish nationalism and the Turkish Republic*, London: Hurst.

Puri, J. (2004) 'Vaxed Links: Perspectives on Nationalism, the State and Modernity, in Puri, J. (ed.), *Encountering Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Pusane, O. (2014) 'Turkey's Kurdish Opening : Long Awaited Achievements and Failed Expectations', *Turkish Studies*, *15*(1), 81–99.

Renan, E. (1990) 'What is a Nation', in H. K. Bhabha, (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, City: Burns & Oates.

Ricouer P. (2004) Memory, History and Forgetting, USA: University of Chicago Press.

Riessman, C. K. (1993) Narrative Analysis: Qualitative Research Methods. Sage Pub.: USA.

_____ (2003) 'Analysing personal Narratives', in J. Holstein and J. Gubrium (eds.) *Inside Interviewing: New Lenses, New Concerns*, Thousand Oaks: London Sage.

_____(2008) *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. Sage Pub.: USA.

Ruane, J. and Todd, J. (1971) 'The Roots of Intense Ethnic Conflict may not in fact be Ethnic: Categories, Communities and Path Dependence', *European Journal of Sociology,* 45(2): 209-235.

Sakallioglu, C., U. (1996) 'Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey', *Int. Journal of Middle East Studies, 28*(2), 231–251.

Saracoglu, C. (2009) 'Exclusive Recognition: The New Dimensions of the Question of Ethnicity and Nationalism in Turkey', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *32*(4), 640-658.

Saracoglu, C. (2011) *Kurds of Modern Turkey: Migration, Neoliberalism and Exclusion in Turkish Society,* London- New York: I. B. Tauris.

Sarıbay, A. Y. (1985) *Turkiye'de Modernlesme, Din ve Parti Politikası* [Modernization, Religion and Party Politics in Turkey]. Istanbul: Iletisim.

Saussure, F. (1966) Course in General Linguistics, in Bally, C. and Sechehaye, A. (eds.), New York: McGraw-Hill.

Scott, J. W. (1991) 'The Evidence of Experience', *Critical Inquiry*, 17/4, 773-797.

Sezgin, D. & Wall, M. A. (2005) 'Constructing the Kurds in the Turkish Press: A Case Study of Hurriyet Newspaper', *Media, Culture & Study,* 27:5, 787-798.

Shanckland, D. (2003) *The Alevis in Turkey: The Emergence of a Secular Islamic Tradition,* RoutledgeCurzon: USA.

Shaw, S.J. & Shaw, E. K. (1977) *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. II: Reforms, Revolution and Republic, The Rise of the Modern Turkey 1808-1975*, Cambridge University Press: UK.

Shelton, N., J.(2000) "A Reconceptualization of How We Study Issues of Racial Prejudice", *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 4 (4), 374-390.

Silverstein, P. A. (2005) 'Immigrant Racialization and the New Savage Slot: Race, Migration, and Immigration in the New Europe', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 34(1), 363–384.

Skey, M. (2009) 'The National in Everyday Life: A critical Engagement with Michael Billig's thesis of Banal Nationalism', *The Sociological Review*, 57(2), 331–346.

Skey, M. (2011) *National Belonging and Everyday Life: The Significance of Nationhood in an Uncertain World*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Smith, A. (1998) *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism*, London: Routledge.

_____ (2001) 'Etnosymbolism', in Leoussi, S., A. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, New Brunswick (N.J.): Transaction Publishers.

_____(2008) 'The Limits of Everyday Nationhood', *Ethnicities*, 8, 563-573.

Somer, M. (2002) 'Ethnic Kurds, Endogenous Identities, and Turkey's Democratization and Integration with Europe', *Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, 1(4):74-93.

Somers, M. and Gibson, G. (1994) 'Reclaiming the Epistemological "Other": Narrative and the Social Constitution of Identity', in C. Calhoun (ed.) *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 37–99.

Stanley, L. (1993) 'The Knowing Because Experiencing Subject', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 16 (3), 205-215.

_____(2008) ‘Madness to the Method? Using a Narrative Methodology to Analyse Large-Scale Complex Social Phenomena’, *Qualitative Research*, 8; 435.

_____(2010) ‘Narratives, Selves and Life Writings: Dialogues, Exchanges and Commentaries’ *Special Issue of Life Writing* 7(3).

Stanley, L. and Temple, B. (2008) ‘Narrative Methodologies: Subjects, Silences, Re-readings and Analyses’, *Qualitative Research*, 8, 275-280.

Taylor, C. (1989) *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thompson, A. (2001) ‘Nations, National Identities and Human Agency: Putting People Back into Nations’, *The Sociological Review*, *49*(1), 18–32.

Tilly, C. (2002) *Stories, Identities and Social Change*, USA: Rowman&Littlefield Publisher.

Tilly, C. (2006) *Why?*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Tilly, C. (2007) ‘Afterword: Political Ethnography as Art and Science’, *in* Joseph, L., Mahler, M. and Auyero, J. (eds.), *New Perspectives in Political Ethnography*, USA: Springer.

Unver, H. A. (2009) ‘*Turkey’s ‘Deep-State’ and the Ergenekon Conundrum’,* The Middle East Institute Policy Brief 29, 1–25.

Updegraf, R. (2012) ‘The Kurdish Question’, *Journal of Democracy*, 23(1), 119-128.

Van Bruinessen, M. (1996) Kurds, Turks and the Alevi Revival in Turkey. *Middle East Report*, *200*(200), 7. doi:10.2307/3013260

Verkuyten, M. (2005) ‘Accounting for Ethnic Discrimination a Discursive Study among Minority and Majority Group Members’, *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*.

Wortham, S., Lee, K., and Mortimer, K. (2011) ‘Racialization in Payday Mugging Narratives’, *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 21(S1), 56–75.

White, H. (1987) ‘The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality” in *The Context of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University, 185-215.

White, J. (2009) ‘Thematization and Collective Positioning in Everyday Political Talk’, *British Journal of Political Science*, 39 (4), 699-709.

Whitebrook, M. (2001) *Identity Narrative and Politics*, London: Routledge.

Wittgenstein, L. (1968) *Philosophical Investigations*, New York: Macmillan.

Yavuz, M., H. and Ozcan, N. A. (2007) ‘Crisis in Turkey: The Conflict of Political Languages’, *Middle East Policy*, *14*(3), 118–135.

Yegen, M. (1996) ‘The Turkish State Discourse and the Exclusion of Kurdish Identity’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, *32*(2), 216–229.

_____ (1999) ‘The Kurdish Question in Turkish State Discourse’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, *34*(4), 555–568.

_____(2004) ‘Citizenship and Ethnicity in Turkey’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, *40*(6), 51–66.

_____(2007) ‘Turkish Nationalism and the Kurdish Question’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *30*(1), 119–151.

_____(2009) ‘Prospective-Turks’ or ‘Pseudo-Citizens:’ Kurds in Turkey’, *The Middle East Journal, 63*(4), 597–615.

Yocum, G. (2005) ‘Review: The Alevis in Turkey: The Emergence of a Secular Islamic Tradition’, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion, 73*(2), 583–585.

Yoruk, E., and Ozsoy, H. (2013) ‘Shifting Forms of Turkish State Paternalism Toward the Kurds: Social Assistance as “Benevolent” Control’, *Dialectical Anthropology, 37*(1), 153–158.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006) ‘Belonging and Politics of Belonging’, *Patterns of Prejudice,* 40(3), 197-214.

Zeydanlıoglu, W. (2009) ‘Torture and Turkification in the Diyarbakır Military Prison’. in Zeydanlıoglu, T. P. (ed.), *Rights, Citizenship & Torture: Perspectives on Evil, Law and the State.* Oxford, UK: Inter-Disciplinary Press.

Zurcher, E. J. (2004) *Turkey: A Modern History*, New York: I.B. Tauris.

Appendices

Table 1

No.	Name	Ethnicity	Interview Location	Level Of Education	Religion Sect	District Of Residence	Age
1	Umut	Turkish	Coffee Shop	Postgraduate	SUNNI	Yenimahalle	29
2	Ufuk	Turkish	Workplace	Primary School	SUNNI	Çankaya	39
3	Emine	Turkish	Workplace	Primary School	SUNNI	Mamak	36
4	Kenan	Turkish	Workplace	Primary School	SUNNI	Mamak	31
5	Ali	Turkish	Workplace	Primary School	SUNNI	Mamak	24
6	Onur	Kurdish	Workplace	High School	SUNNI	Keçiören	55
7	Mehmet	Turkish	Workplace	Graduate	SUNNI	Etimesgut	32
8	Nihan	Turkish	Workplace	High School	SUNNI	Mamak	43
9	Selen	Kurdish	Her Own Flat	Graduate	ALEVI	Mamak	31
10	Doğan	Turkish	Workplace	Graduate	SUNNI	Yenimahalle	40
11	Aslı	Turkish	Coffee Shop	Graduate	SUNNI	Etimesgut	24
12	Pelin	Turkish	Coffee Shop	Graduate	SUNNI	Çankaya	23
13	Dilber	Kurdish	Her Own Flat	Secondary School	ALEVI	Sincan	47
14	Şahin	Kurdish	His Own Flat	High School	ALEVI	Sincan	50
15	Demet	Kurdish	Her Own Flat	High School	ALEVI	Sincan	18
16	Nursel	Turkish	Her Own Flat	High School	SUNNI	Yenimahalle	56
17	Mustafa	Turkish	Workplace	High School	SUNNI	Keçiören	55
18	Adem	Turkish	Workplace	High School	SUNNI	Mamak	42
19	Hasan	Kurdish	Workplace	Primary School	ŞAFİİ	Altındağ	25
20	Yavuz	Kurdish	Coffee Shop	High School	ŞAFİİ	Çankaya	26
21	Ömer	Kurdish	Coffee Shop	High School	ŞAFİİ	Çankaya	30
22	Neriman	Kurdish	Her Own Flat	Graduate	SUNNI	Etimesgut	54
23	Nermin	Kurdish	Her Own Flat	High School	SUNNI	Etimesgut	53
24	Nazım	Kurdish	Coffee Shop	High School	ŞAFİİ	Çankaya	36
25	Barış	Turkish	Coffee Shop	High School	SUNNI	Çankaya	21
26	Özlem	Turkish	Coffee Shop	High School	SUNNI	Keçiören	20
27	Cemal	Kurdish	Coffee Shop	High School	SUNNI	Keçiören	68
28	Mahmut	Kurdish	Coffee Shop	Secondary School	ŞAFİİ	Çankaya	40
29	Filiz	Kurdish	Coffee Shop	Graduate	ŞAFİİ	Sincan	27
30	Narin	Kurdish	Her Own Flat	Graduate	SUNNI	Çankaya	31
31	Fatmagül	Kurdish	Coffee Shop	Graduate	SUNNI	Çankaya	48
32	Cevat	Kurdish	Workplace	High School	ŞAFİİ	Yenimahalle	34
33	Gülsüm	Turkish	Her Own Flat	High School	SUNNI	Etimesgut	49
34	Yakup	Kurdish	Coffee Shop	High School	SUNNI	Altındağ	30
35	Dilan	Kurdish	Coffee Shop	High School	SUNNI	Keçiören	18
36	Güliz	Kurdish	Coffee Shop	High School	SUNNI	Keçiören	17
37	Aliye	Kurdish	Workplace	High School	SUNNI	Yenimahalle	43
38	Volkan	Turkish	Workplace	High School	SUNNI	Mamak	36
39	Adil	Turkish	Workplace	Graduate	SUNNI	Yenimahalle	55
40	Berk	Turkish	Workplace	Graduate	SUNNI	Çankaya	25

Figure I: The Map of Ankara

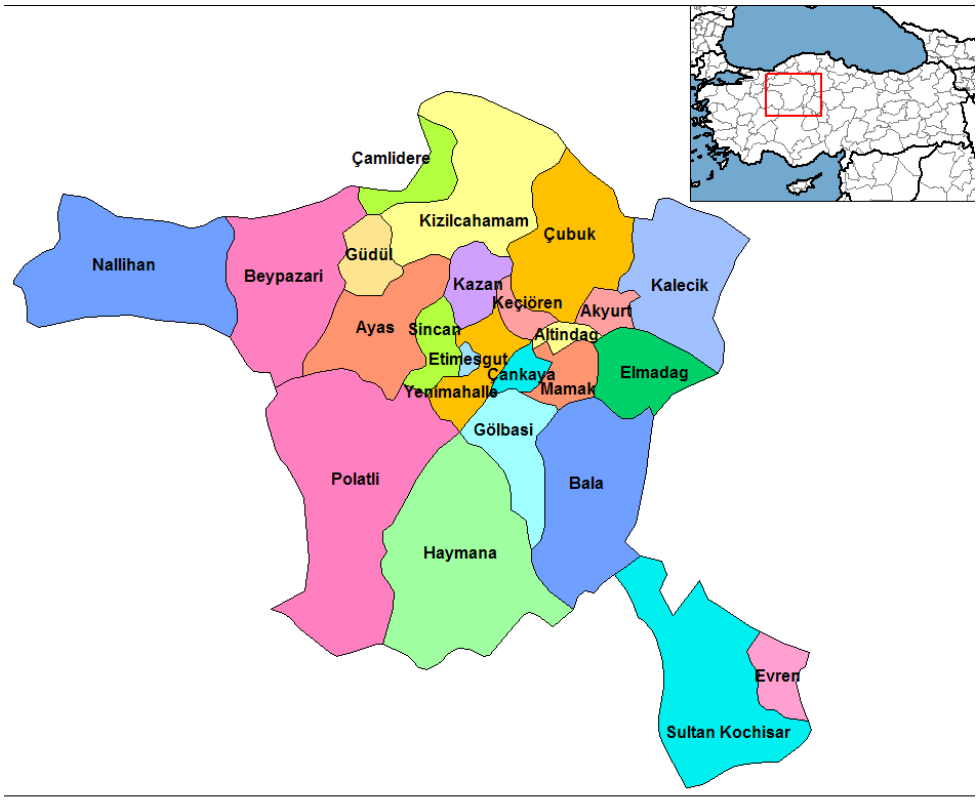

Figure II. The Map of Central Ankara